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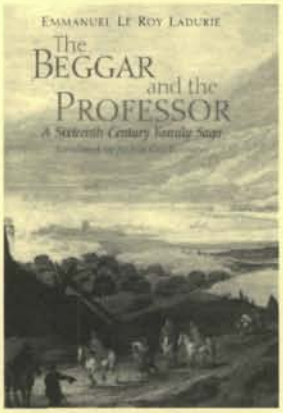

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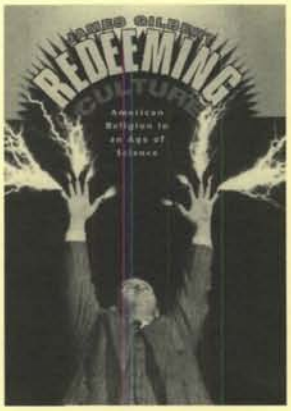

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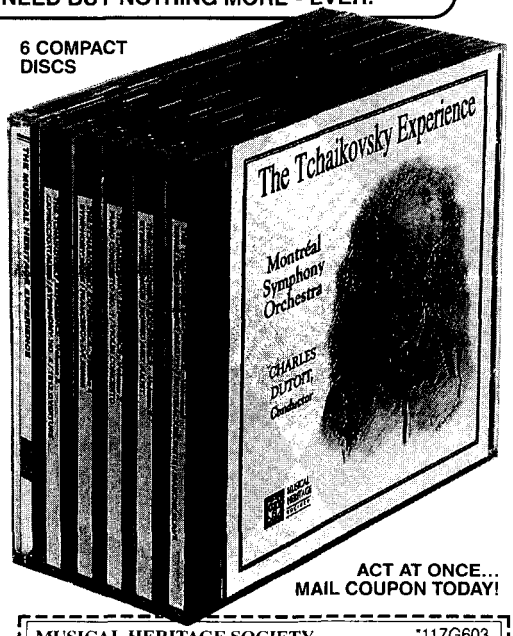

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FROM CAMBRIDGE

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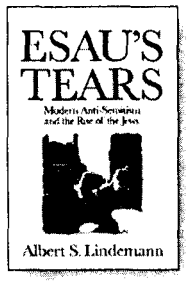
Modern Anti-Semitism and the Rise of the Jews
Albert S. Lindemann



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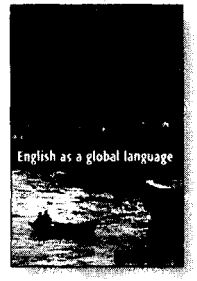

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Grow Up, Why Dontcha?

ARISTIDES

Early in *A Dragon Apparent,* Norman Lewis tells about his travels in Indo-China and his encounter with the religion of Cao-Daïsm, in which, as he writes, "the best years of one's life are its concluding decades." In Cao-Daïsm "the dejection that encroaching age stamps so often in the Western face—the melancholy sense of having outlived one's usefulness—[is] replaced . . . with a complacency of spirit and a prestige that increases automatically with the years." The older one gets in this religion, at least if one wishes to rise in its hierarchy, the greater the number of abstentions one is asked to make. But, as an elderly adherent explains to Norman Lewis, the older one is, the better one is able to abstain from the pleasures of the flesh, and besides, as Lewis concludes, "the turn of the screw was put on gently, so that by the time you had to give things up for the Kingdom of God, you were pretty well ready to give them up anyway. It was all so humane."

It also sounds so true to human development, if not to human nature—and very un-American, if not un-Western. In America, we cling to our pleasures, feeling chagrin as each diminishes in intensity, falls away, or disappears altogether. The name of the longed-for but never-discovered secret of life is youth, perpetual youth. Through diet, exercise, cosmetic surgery, or all combined, we ardently seek it. The means may differ but the end is always the same: how to stay young, how to avoid growing old. Everyone has felt the lure of remaining young. I know I have.

Impossible of achievement, the quest is inevitably frustrated; for youth, though it can sometimes be prolonged a bit, cannot really be maintained much beyond its normal span. Trying to do so is a game that can't be won, a mug's game. Not that this stops vast numbers of people from playing, as witness the crowds at gyms and jogging tracks. "Fitness is about sex and immortality," Wilfred Sheed has written. "By toning up the system, you can prolong youth, just about finesse middle age, and then, when the time comes, go straight into senility." Or, I suppose, be in near perfect shape just in time for death.

One would have thought that everyone had figured this out by now. But the emphasis on youthfulness and the terror of old age in American culture, if anything, seem to have grown greater. Not long ago I came across the expression "the leprosy of old age," an all-too-vivid phrase that just now reflects much ghastly truth. No one wishes to succumb to old age any earlier than is absolutely required, though those of us fortunate enough to achieve our eighties will finally have to do so.

In the meanwhile, the relentless pursuit of youthfulness combined with the fear of old age has done great damage to an early ideal of mine—the ideal of the grown-up. To set aside childish things, to ascend to grown-upness, to arrive at adulthood—this, from my earliest years, was my aspiration, the name of my desire. I could not grow up fast enough. And then, lo, when I had finally done so, the notion of being grown-up, or at any rate of acting the grown-up, seemed, *poof,* to have disappeared, shot down from the deck of the good ship *Zeitgeist.*

Among my strongest early memories are a number of incidents in which I found myself struggling, with genuine though hopeless determination, against being treated as a child. Since I was in fact a child, in certain instances a very young child, I wonder if, as they say in both the therapist's office and the quilt maker's studio, a pattern doesn't begin to emerge.

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The first memory is a series of connected incidents in which I am being put to bed well before I am prepared to depart the scene. In one room is not so much terrifying as damnably boring darkness; in the other, amusing radio shows, adults, conversation, pleasing company. The reasonableness of this arrangement, in which I must go to bed earlier than everyone else simply because I am the youngest and the smallest, never came near to being persuasive to me. Unlike the Proust kid, I didn't yearn for my mother. I wanted, instead, more action.

Mine was the last generation of males in this country that had to earn its long pants, or at least had to wait until a certain age to wear them. Between short and long pants came those dopey pants called knickers. Knickers stopped and bagged at the knee and were worn with long, usually thick socks that never stayed up. Jeans were not then an alternative: dungarees were something farmers wore and Levi Strauss & Company had not yet turned its marketing attentions east or even middlewest. Knickers, then, were all a boy could wear until at some official agreed-upon time—age nine? ten?—he was allowed a pair of long pants, usually to be worn on special occasions.

When I was six years old, my father told me that he was going to take me with him to his tailor to have a suit made for me. I thought, with great delight, that I had beaten the clock. Young as I was, going up in the elevator to the tailor's in his building on Wabash Avenue in the Loop, I sensed that I was taking part in something like a genuine *rite de passage.*

The masculine atmosphere of the tailor's shop reinforced the feeling: lots of cigar smoke, thick bolts of richly textured cloth set out on high tables, much business talk. My father let me choose my own material; and, as I recall, I did not disgrace myself. Now I am standing before a three-way mirror, and one of the tailors, a man with a strong foreign accent, is draping material over me, his mouth full of pins, which doesn't stop him from talking with my father. I inquire whether it would be possible to have the suit made with two pairs of trousers. "What do you mean 'trousers'?" says the tailor. "We're talking here about a suit with short pants." Short pants! I was heartbroken beyond tears. If I then knew the words to vent my true feelings, the air in the shop would have turned blue with profanity.

Yet another dusty resentment: when I was eight and a half, I was sent to a summer camp for boys in Eagle River, Wisconsin, where I did acquire the requisite profanity and the certain knowledge that my taste for roughing it was limited to tolerating relatively slow room service. My parents were planning a trip to visit me midway through the summer. Was there anything that I might need that they could bring me? they asked. There was one thing, I suggested, a hunting knife. No objection was voiced.

I awaited the knife with rather greater anticipation than I did my parents. When they arrived, they gave me the knife, an instrument roughly two inches long made by a firm named Swank; it had an outside of simulated mother of pearl and could be attached to one's key chain. Not exactly what I had in mind. When I explained what I had wanted—a hunting knife with a blade five or six inches long and a bone handle, which fit into a leather holster—my mother smiled and, cupping my cheek gently in her manicured hand, said, "You must be crazy. Your father and I would never buy a little boy a knife like that." Another disappointment.

I hope you won't think I have been storing these little incidents up as a form of grievance collecting. Not so. In each case, my parents were, of course, perfectly correct in acting as they did. But what is striking to me today about their behavior is its contrast with the wide latitude they gave me in so many other ways. Apart from these and a few other similar incidents, my parents didn't seem all that eager to keep me childish. They talked about business and gossiped about friends and relatives in front of me. I even recall overhearing them and their friends telling slightly off-color jokes. ("Rectum hell," went the punch line to one about a man who falls off the roof of a three-story building on his duff, "it damned near killed him.")

My parents didn't have any special talk or language for children that I can remember. There was no cuddly talk for my younger brother, even when he was an infant. And I don't recall their ever being condescending in their conversation with me. Neither my brother nor I was given a vast amount of attention, let alone that special limelightish attention reserved for children these days. ("Quiet, everyone, Joey's going to recite a poem now.")

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My sense of my own place in the household was that of an abbreviated adult, with fewer privileges (and earlier hours) and lesser responsibilities.

My father, who was born at the end of 1907, was a man particularly marked by the Depression. It hit just as he came on stage at age twenty-one. Today, at the age of eighty-nine, he still seems to me marked by it and is, vaguely, awaiting its return. Many of his principles derive from his Depression experience: don't overspend, always put something by for a rainy day, expect the worst. I vividly remember his inspecting the poor job I had done in mowing our small lawn in Chicago. He pointed out the many flaws in the job, shook his head sadly, and, turning to look me in the eye, index finger waggling, announced, "You know, in the next Depression, you're the kind of guy they fire first." I was, I believe, eleven.

Between the ages of sixteen and nineteen, during the summers, I began to work with my father. I drove him to call on customers in nearby middlewestern states, and I carried his sample cases and helped him fill orders. We spent vast amounts of time alone together—on the road, as the old phrase had it—and what, one might wonder, did we talk about? Chiefly, my recollection is, I listened to my father's homilies about business. He told me, at sixteen, how important it was to keep a low overhead. He told me that a businessman really makes his money not in selling but in buying—if he buys right, all good things follow. He once told me that business is done on three different levels in America. At the highest, products are supported by national advertising and public relations; at the next level, customers and clients are wined and dined, taken to the theater, fixed up with women, bribed in various ways; and then there was the third, his level. "What happens there, Dad?" I asked. "Very simple," he said, "at my level, you cut prices."

I never consciously sought my parents' approval. Friends, not parents, were the audience to which I played. It's closer to the truth to say that I wished only to avoid my parents' disapproval, which I was able to do most of the time, so that I might go my own way. Only one of the fathers of the boys I grew up with took an active, participatory interest in his son's life by regularly coming to our athletic games, and for his interest a Latinist among us gave the poor guy the name Omnipresent. He quickly became a figure of ridicule. In those days it appeared unseemly for a serious man to find so much time for his children. Since that time—the early 1950s—most American fathers have become, out of desire or fear of guilt, Omnipresents of one kind or another.

The model of how I wished to live didn't come from my parents. This for me came from a combination of the movies and the flashier elements of the culture. My parents lived quietly, taking their social life from a small number of friends and relatives. They were conservative people really, content, never living beyond their means or longing for anything they couldn't have, though in truth they didn't want all that much. I had in mind for myself a vague but still appealing notion of sophistication. And this set in early.

At age thirteen I was sent to something called Fortnightly, dancing classes in which we learned ballroom manners and intricate foxtrots, sambas, and other elaborate dances I have long since forgotten. But I do remember meeting with four or five friends before dance classes began to play penny poker, neckties loosened, suit jackets on the backs of our chairs, cigarettes dangling from the corners of our mouths. The imitation of what we took to be adulthood had begun.

It got under way in earnest at the age of fifteen, when it was possible to get a driver's license in Chicago. A Chicago driver's license was the open sesame that revealed new worlds for a boy to explore, and my friends and I did so, with great exuberance, including as many of its dark corners as we could discover. We sought out many light ones, too: good inexpensive restaurants, ballparks, places to meet girls. Having the use of a car, usually one of our parents' cars, was the first powerful evidence of the freedom that being a grown-up carried with it. It seemed pretty swell then—and it still does now.

Not that I rushed toward adulthood the way some of my contemporaries did. In my high school there were a small number of boys and girls with nothing boyish or girlish about them. The boys dressed differently: no Levi's, no washpants, no loafers, but slacks and serious shoes; stockings and makeup for the girls. The boys often had their own cars. The girls had a physical maturity about them and frequently were going with fellows three or four

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years out of high school; they themselves were waiting for the end of high school to marry, which they usually did. They were both merely biding their time in high school.

My own position in high school was that of genial screw-off; I was a half-decent athlete and an all but non-existent student—whether I would go on to college was a bit unclear right up until the end. In those days, 1954, not every middle-class kid automatically went off to college. Since I had shown neither interest nor aptitude for study—I finished just above the lowest quarter of my graduating class—my father, one day in my last year of high school, said to me: "If you want to go to college, I shall be glad to pay for it. But my own sense is that you would make a terrific salesman, and maybe college, in your case, would be just a waste of time." I didn't think long about it. At eighteen, much as I wanted to be out in the world, I decided that I also wanted a few more carefree years, so I enrolled myself at the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana, which in those days took all state residents, no matter how poor their high school record.

College did, in fact, what I wanted it to do: it allowed me to put off adulthood for another four years. I was able to try out various roles, among them fraternity boy, bohemian, little-magazine literatus, and deep thinker. But when it was done, it was done. I could not have lasted four more years as a graduate student.

I was lucky, I think, that the draft was still intact. The draft gave young men another two years to think about what they wanted to do with their lives. It also introduced them to a wider America than they may have hitherto known, locked as most Americans are behind their own ethnic and social-class walls. And, for me, another thing that the draft did was make me hungry for civilian—which is to say, adult—life.

Philip Larkin must have shared some of these sentiments. "It was that verse about becoming again as a little child that caused the first sharp waning of my Christian sympathies," he wrote. "If the Kingdom of Heaven could be entered only by those fulfilling such a condition I knew I should be unhappy there." Larkin wrote this in a review of a volume of the Opies' extensive study of children and their folklore. "It was not the prospect of being deprived of money, keys, wallet, letters, books, long-playing records, drinks, the opposite sex, and other solaces of adulthood that upset me," Larkin continued, "but having to put up indefinitely with the company of other children, their noise, their nastiness, their boasting, their back-answers, their cruelty, their silliness."

I don't share Larkin's contempt for children—"the little scum," as Hesketh Pearson once called them—reserving mine for people of adult age who prefer to carry themselves as children. Recently I was reading along in a most interesting book, *The Anatomy of Disgust* by William Ian Miller, full of admiration for its author's erudition and literary power, when he, to illustrate a point about the contempt not infrequently found among members of different social classes, related an encounter between himself and a stonemason he had hired to do some work on his house in Ann Arbor. When Miller "rode up on [his] bicycle, backpack on [his] back" to say hello, he sensed the mason's contempt for him. "He a teacher?" the man asked Miller's wife. Miller remarks that the man straightaway saw him as "a feminized male," from which perception his contempt flowed.

I have to add, though a sometime university teacher myself, as soon as Miller rode up on that bike wearing that backpack, I, too, felt an involuntary touch of contempt for him. It is the backpack, not the bike, that did it. I assume that Miller, a full professor at the University of Michigan Law School, must be no younger than in his forties, perhaps older. Yet here he is boppin' around in what is essentially the garb of a student. In doing so, he seeks, I take it, a kind of agelessness—an agelessness, for all I know, he may very well feel. Somehow, however earnest he may be about his status as husband, father, teacher, he still wants to seem youthful. Had he returned home in suit or jacket and tie, my guess is that the mason would not have seemed in the least contemptuous of him. I know I wouldn't have. I don't even require a jacket and tie. But I cannot bear that backpack on anyone over twenty-five.

One of the divisions of the contemporary world is between those who are prepared to dress (roughly) their age and those who see clothes as a means to fight off age. At my university, there are now tenured professors teaching in deliberately unlaced gym shoes. I

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know of associate deans who never wear neckties. Others—balding, paunchy, droopy-lidded—have not had a fabric other than denim touch their hindquarters for decades. They, poor dears, believe they are staying young.

Clothes have played a large part in bringing about the drift away from grown-up to youth culture. In part, dress in America—and not America alone—has changed owing to an increase in informality across the board in contemporary life. As a boy, I have no memory of my father or any of his friends owning any casual clothes. They wore suits everywhere, even sitting around on a Sunday afternoon; they never left the house without a serious hat. Men now dress, much of the time, like boys, in jeans, sport shirts, gym shoes, the ubiquitous baseball cap. Meanwhile, little girls dress like grown women, in short shorts, bikinis, platform shoes—sexy is the theme. The result is to erase the line between the youthful and the mature, though it doesn't really work. Instead it gives a tone of formlessness to the society that adopts it.

Why should I care about any of this? Is it my business if people wish to appear younger than their true age? If seeming youthful is pleasing to them, why not wish these people Godspeed, however hopeless their endeavor? I really ought to be more tolerant. But, alas, I cannot.

The United States, if not the Western world, has been on a great youth binge for at least thirty or forty years now. My guess is that the adulation of youth, as an American phenomenon, began with the election to the presidency of John F. Kennedy. Suddenly, "to be young was very heaven!" At forty-two, Kennedy was the youngest man ever elected president. He was the first president not to wear a hat. He had an athletic build, a beautiful wife, and a low hairline. (We would subsequently learn that he had Addison's disease, a bad back, and other painful injuries to what was essentially an old man's body.) The unspoken part of Kennedy-inspired youth worship was a reduction in admiration for anyone older. To be beyond, say, fifty, was, not much question about it, to be a little out of it. "As we grow older," wrote Gerald Murphy, "we must guard against a feeling of lowered consequence."

The student uprisings later in the decade of the sixties set the lock—a sort of aortic clamp—on this. To be young then was not only desirable, it was required as a bona fides of one's integrity and honor. No one over thirty was to be trusted—this was one of the shibboleths of the day—for it was assumed that anyone beyond that age had already made too many compromises, was already too greatly swept up by something called the system, was too much implicated in the way things were. Perhaps at no other time in history was being young felt to be more desirable.

Teaching college students in the 1970s and 1980s, I sensed among many of them what I used to think of as sixties envy. And, of course, in our own day one still sees what are essentially 1960s characters, now in their fifties, walking the streets, tie-dyed, long-haired, sadly sandaled, neither grateful nor dead, waiting for a bus to the past.

The cult of youthfulness may be the principal legacy of the 1960s. And this cult—more like a national craze—allows a very wide berth for youthfulness. Today one would not think to say that no one over thirty is to be trusted; that sentiment has been replaced by the notion that no one under forty needs to get serious. One of the curious qualities I have noticed about recent generations is the absence of any indecent hurry to get started in life.

Consider two successful television shows, *Seinfeld* and *Friends*, where one encounters precisely the kind of perpetual adolescent I have been attempting to describe. Played for laughs, the indecisiveness of the characters in both shows results in a richly comic narcissism, with no one having anything like a center to his or her life and with the notion of adulthood existing in the dim distance, an unreachable utopia. On one of the *Seinfeld* episodes the hopelessly selfish character George Costanza is about to enter into an affair with a married woman. "An affair!" he exclaims. "It's like stockings and martinis and William Holden. It's so adult!" Poor Georgie.

To turn to another George, in *Angel in the Whirlwind*, his history of the American Revolutionary War, Benson Bobrick remarks that "by the time he was sixteen, George [Washington] appeared in every respect an adult." Marcus Cunliffe, in his book on Washington, reinforces the point, saying of Washington that he lived at Ferry Farm with his mother, "leaving childhood behind and entering the short period of youth that in colonial times so often merged with adult life."

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William Osler, the great physician, widened the point by asserting "the comparative uselessness of men above forty years of age." Osler added: "Take the sum of human achievement in action, in science, in art, in literature—subtract the work of men above forty, and, while we would miss great treasures, even priceless treasures, we would practically be where we are today."

In 1932 there was a best-seller titled *Life Begins at Forty* by Walter B. Pitkin. I never read it, but I take it that its message was that one needn't feel old at age forty, that many opportunities still existed at that hoary age—occupational, financial, romantic—and that life was scarcely over. It was, friends, just beginning.

Today that title seems quaint. Many people, far from feeling old at forty, haven't really begun their lives at all. Before forty, there is graduate school, general fooling around, possibly professional school, maybe a change in one's career choice, a late marriage, having a child at thirty-eight or thereabouts. This is how, I believe, lots of people nowadays view things. And, of course, some people wait to begin their lives till fifty or beyond—wait, in some cases perhaps, for the next life.

Oddly, this phenomenon seems most often to strike the especially bright. Because they are so bright, the world seems a sea of possibilities to them. I see this among a handful of my former students. One among them, who can write and who knows computer technology, began, soon after college, working for a large consulting firm. Then he ran a business of his own, went to law school, clerked for a well-placed and famous judge, decided not to practice law, joined a firm of European consultants, and wrote a book. What he will do next I cannot say. When he wrote to tell me that he had decided the law was not for him, I replied that I understood but that he was not to ask me for a recommendation to medical school.

The phrase "the despair of possibility" is Kierkegaard's. The brilliantly gloomy Swede knew that one can as easily drown in the sea of possibility as in the swamp of necessity. In *The Sickness unto Death*, he wrote:

> Nor is it merely due to lack of strength when the soul goes astray in possibility—at least this is not to be understood as people commonly understand it. What really is lacking is the power to obey, to submit to the necessary in oneself, to what may be called one's limit. Therefore the misfortune does not consist in the fact that such a self did not amount to anything in the world; no, the misfortune is that the man did not become aware of himself, aware that the self he is, is a perfectly defined something, and so is the necessary. On the contrary, he lost himself, owing to the fact that this self was seen fantastically reflected in the possible.

So it seems with people who wish endlessly to be young, to avoid responsibility, to avoid committing themselves to anything definite, lest other doors close on them. These people remain in a perpetual state of development. As with some movies that never get made, their lives, like the movie scripts, reside in what the kids on the coast call "development hell." And hell it must be, always waiting for life to begin, thinking in the grammatical tense known as the future permanent.

Some people are in jobs where not to seem young can work to their detriment. A few years ago I wrote a screenplay for a decent and likeable producer who one morning, over the phone, told me it was his birthday. When I congratulated him, he said that it wasn't altogether a celebratory occasion. He was now forty-one, and forty-one was, for Hollywood, a bit long in the tooth—unless, of course, one had a few large commercial or artistic triumphs to one's credit, which he, till now, didn't have. In Hollywood, apparently, life can be over at forty.

The point seems to be confirmed in movies of the past few decades. The number of roles for grown-ups in the movies has been very small—minuscule, even. Looking at the male side only, the actors of the 1940s and 1950s had a maturity that is absent from the actors of today. Roles were written that called for a certain grown-upness that no longer exists among us. Take Clark Gable, Gary Cooper, Humphrey Bogart, Gregory Peck, Ray Milland, Walter Pidgeon—grown-ups all. Or consider Spencer Tracy: even when young, he didn't seem young. These were men who could wear suits, not look laughable in hats. There were even parts for older gents: Lionel Barrymore, Adolphe Menjou, Walter Huston, Claude Rains. Male movie stars of our own day—Robert Redford, Al Pacino, Tom Cruise, Harrison Ford, Tom Hanks—are all, in their movie personas, essentially boys, never to be

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thought of as beyond their late thirties. (Redford is, in fact, sixty.) To be beyond one's late thirties, in the world projected by Hollywood, is to become a quite different persona, one, at least on the screen, strictly non grata.

Some people cannot help but think of themselves as young. W. H. Auden claimed that he always thought himself the youngest person in the room; no doubt this was part of his heritage of extreme precocity. Yet Auden also said, to Robert Craft, that "obviously it is normal to think of oneself as younger than one is, but fatal to want to be younger." In *The Man Without Qualities*, Robert Musil speaks of "those practicing the profession of being the next generation." I fear this is the fate that has befallen so many people who came of age in the 1960s, who also thought of themselves as the wave of the future.

One sees them everywhere. The journalist David Frum recognized one in Austin Hall, at Harvard, when he returned to his tenth-year law school reunion: "And there in front of the class was a teacher I recognized. In his blue jeans, Eddie Bauer shirt, and hiking boots, he was hanging on to the appurtenances of youth as desperately as ever. But not even the most adamantly anti-ageist student could fail to notice that he had irrevocably passed his 50th birthday." Malraux somewhere says that "there are no grown-ups," but he may not have known the half of it.

Who was it who said that most women early choose to regard themselves, for the remainder of their days, as either eighteen or eighty? A pity if true, for there are so many interesting ages in betwixt. I myself have a bias in favor of middle-aged beauty in women as beauty at its most elegant. It's a mistake, in any case, to lock oneself into a set age too early in life. Hemingway, poor man, seems to have done that; everyone may have called him Papa, but he was finally an absurdly childish fellow. And his imitators, of course, seem even more absurd.

And yet, as the disc jockeys once had it, the beat goes on. Among the most commercially successful people in the nation just now are Madonna, Mike Tyson, Michael Jackson, Dennis Rodman, and Howard Stern; the latter has said, "I am perpetually a nine-year-old child," without, he might have added, a mother around to wash his mouth out with soap. When the *New York Times* book critic Michiko Kakutani wrote a column titled "Adolescence Lives!" a man named John Frederick wrote in to add that so-called grown-ups "ape the pattern of their young. Traipsing after fads, they are preoccupied with keeping up." Mr. Frederick added the suggestion that "the symbol of our regression is the baseball cap," now worn "even in eating-places, in defiance of once-understood standards of courtesy, which adults used to set."

How many young men today are even aware that wearing a hat indoors is thought bad form? One assumes that the number is impressively small. What is lost by the absence of this knowledge? Some might argue nothing whatsoever, but I would not be among them. Not wearing a hat indoors, a man's tipping or taking off his hat as a sign of respect for a woman—these and other little touches are useful in several ways, including the aesthetic. A friend, attempting to demonstrate the difference between writing for the screen and writing for the page, once cited a scene in a movie in which a man and woman get into an elevator. There is a coldness between them. The man is wearing a hat. The elevator stops, and an attractive woman gets on. The man immediately takes off his hat. A lot is said by this gesture. But it won't be understood if people don't know that men are supposed to take off their hats indoors, especially in the company of women.

A preachy tone seems to have crept into this essay, which causes me to ask if I think of myself as grown-up. I find the answer a little less than obvious. "I always longed to be grown-up," said Max Beerbohm, recounting the early years of his life, and so, as I hope I have made plain, have I. But did Beerbohm really achieve fully fleshed adulthood? Despite his white hair and calculated effort to seem a man of another age, he spent much of his time drawing caricatures of friends and prominent people, and he doctored the copies of books written by friends so that they read crazily. I would say that, though the child in him never quite died—and a good thing for his art, too—Beerbohm was finally, in fact early, grown-up because in himself he created an extraordinary human character, handsomely burnished, of a kind that the world had not seen before and hasn't since.

Do I qualify as grown-up? Despite my having had charge of children as long as forty years ago, having more gray than brown hair, show-

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ing all the seams and scars of aging and a few for extra credit, I retain my doubts. Permit me to give an example from roughly a decade ago of the kind that stirs such doubts. Parental Guidance is invoked here. Mine is a story with blue material and one that illustrates the apothegm that a dirty mind never sleeps.

I had been asked to write a brief essay for *Gentlemen's Quarterly*, which is not for gentlemen and comes out monthly, which makes its entire name a lie. My subject was the way male academics dress. The essay went down well enough with *GQ*'s editors, but I was asked if I would mind posing for a photograph of myself in full classroom regalia to run along with the essay. I agreed. A photographer was assigned; a date set; I chose the scene of the crime, which is to say, the classroom in which the photograph would be taken.

Half an hour before the photographer and his crew showed up (he brought along a man to carry his various cameras, tripods, lights, and the rest, and a man who was officially known as a "stylist," who would set up the photograph and make sure I was less rumpled than usual), I slipped into the room in which I was to be photographed and made a slight alteration. What I did was write out a certain quotation from Baudelaire on the board in front of which I was to be posed. The quotation read: *"Plus un homme cultive les arts, moins il bande."* (Rough translation: The more a man immerses himself in the arts, the poorer his sex life.) Ever the exacting scholar, I wrote Baudelaire's name under the quotation and took a powder.

I am perhaps too pleased to report that neither the photographer nor the stylist thought to erase the Baudelaire quotation. And so it appeared, wonderfully legible, in the background behind my rather sour face in the same issue of *Gentlemen's Quarterly* as my slight, fifteen-hundred-word essay. I was ready to overlook the possibility that I looked like a poster boy for Baudelaire's aphorism. I felt as if I had pulled off a successful bank job instead of merely an oblique, perfectly impractical joke. Was this the conduct of a grown-up?

I don't think that becoming a grown-up means losing your sense of playfulness. What it does mean, I believe, is the willingness to make choices, take chances, commit yourself to one way of life over another. "If I want to be any kind of grown-up," the still-youthful novelist David Foster Wallace writes in an amusing essay on taking a luxury cruise, "I have to make choices and regret foreclosures and try to live with them." One of those foreclosures is on your own personality, which shouldn't be forever changing but should be carved out of your experience, polished like a sculpture or any other work of art. The way toward being grown-up is to be yourself. Since you have but one life to live, why not live it as an adult.

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Depression

Darker than Darkness

JOEL P. SMITH

As she tossed the book toward the foot of my bed, Clare turned toward me, forced a smile, and chuckled. It, too, was forced so that it sounded more like a snort. She was angry, irritated that I had asked her to read *Darkness Visible*, William Styron's acclaimed book on his depression.

We met in a psychiatric hospital where we both were having electric shock treatments, other remedies for our enduring depressions having failed over many years. Clare was tall, too thin, usually unkempt, but handsome in a natural way. Her brown eyes glistened with intelligence. Or maybe I wished it were intelligence rather than desperation, for she certainly was intelligent. She was a poet who was completing a doctorate. "Circling the landing field" she called it, by which she meant that because of depression she had trouble completing her dissertation. She was writing about American poets, contemporary women, who she felt had new insight into the darkest corners of the human situation. I did not know any of them except Jane Kenyon. (God bless. She knew a lot about depression and she learned every bit of it the hard way.) Naturally, I wondered if Clare was seeking salvation in her work. As much as I wanted to tell her of my doubt that you can read or study your way out of a depression, I didn't challenge her. She was challenged enough. Anyway, what did I know?

Although Clare had just turned thirty, exactly half my age, we were powerfully drawn to each other, probably because we were veterans of these wars. There is considerable solace in that. We held hands during group sessions and when we walked the halls. We took every meal together, but we didn't always talk, not like two intellectuals who discover each other on a long bus trip anyway. That was not our bond. Somehow, we were more deeply connected.

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There were, of course, many revelations, as there usually are with intimacy; but none so interesting, surprising, and memorable as the day Clare said, while we were walking: "It's not good to be a loner like me, I know. But getting close to the others in the department frightens me. They all believe God is dead. If that's so, the only purposes we have are what we can beg, borrow, or steal."

"So what else is new," I said, meaning that's how most of us view the human situation. We generate our own purposes. Clare instantly dropped my hand and withdrew herself—so stony cold it seemed she would never speak to me again. How strange, I thought, how passing strange that Clare, who was the most tortured person I had known, instead of being persuaded of cosmic indifference, wanted superior sanction for her purposes. But then strange are the ways. Aren't they?

We depressed individuals are just that, individuals, consigned to darkness without a clue about how to cope. It doesn't help to dump us into a separate category, as if to know one is to know us all. Categorical thinking is always dangerous, if only because it is the ground of prejudice. That said and deeply felt, however, I am wary of the preference for seeing each depression as unique. That's true, of course: each depression afflicts a unique individual. But that approach leads to wallowing in the ineffability of feeling, which I sometimes fear is the preference of too many therapists. The more subjective the reading in a particular situation, the greater the authority of the therapist, and the greater the difficulty of evaluating the therapist's approach: medicine, talking, herbs, Freud, cognitive approaches, meditation, and on and on. You pays your money and you makes your choice.

My point is precisely this: Isolation is one of the worst problems with depression. Endorsing uniqueness makes it worse. Instead, we need to get clear about what it means to be depressed. We need a vocabulary—yes, one that relies upon generalizations. Is there another way? How else will we depressed people ever claim the attention of others and ultimately earn an understanding of this awful illness? There is a difference between therapy and advocacy.

In my experience there are several similar components to almost all depressions. Three of these are relatively familiar:

- Our energy is radically reduced. We feel flaccid. This means, among other things, that we lack self-starting qualities.
- Our enthusiasm is also radically reduced. We lack interest in others, whether family, friends, or colleagues, and in those activities, personal and vocational, which were the day-to-day agendas of our lives.
- Our hope is gone. Actually, we are profoundly pessimistic and preoccupied with death. This is often referred to as darkness or emptiness—life without meaning and therefore spiritually bereft.

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The relative lack of these three resources is a wicked combination. Any one of them would cause withdrawal. All three amount to a paralysis—spiritual as well as physical—which means we are without the will to get going. We literally lack the capacity to save ourselves. More. All depressed people I have known share a sense of dread. Almost all the time it feels that the worst hasn't yet happened. Bad as it is, more is coming down, and soon. We don't know what it will be. The dread is undifferentiated. We do, however, know it's coming. This means we try to hide, which is futile, except to withdraw even deeper within our already spiritually shriveled selves.

Finally, we depressed people are contemptuous of ourselves. This contempt goes way beyond guilt. We are ashamed. We believe we are obnoxious, ugly, repugnant. These feelings can become very ripe, so that the word *self-loathing* contains not the slightest exaggeration. I, for example, have sometimes felt I was so bad that I emitted an awful odor, worse than rank garbage.

These several factors—major losses of energy, enthusiasm, and hope, along with dread and self-contempt—are the stuff of depression. Naturally, in a particular case some of these are worse than others. For me self-loathing is the worst. But all are present, more or less, in each case of depression. Who, then, can deny it's a heavy load or, for God's sake, blame those who bend and then break down? I don't mind that old-fashioned word at all. Depression is a breakdown.

We depressed people suffer more than is necessary because so many others trivialize depression by assuming it is ordinary. After all, they say, we all have bad days; we all get the blues. But depression is worse than the blues by several orders of magnitude. This is why so many depressed people are put down when others try to cheer us up. At best, these cheerful words reveal a disconnect, a failure to understand the stuff of depression. At worst, the cheerful words are received by us as accusations that feed our self-contempt.

For example, character, by which I mean accepting who I am and the consequences of my choices, was the center of my personal code. But depression caused a right-angle turn in my life. Now I procrastinate. I prevaricate. If patronized, even slightly, I go off like a verbal volcano. I am no longer a stand-up guy whose word is his deed. I slip-slide along, cowering in the face of life's ordinary events, such as a knock on my door, or seeing something such as a photo or a friend's address that reminds me of the vitality I used to have and of the regard others had for me.

So am I a coward? Yes, I certainly am, if depression is the equivalent of the blues. But does that make sense? Wouldn't I stand up if I could? Do I prefer failure and self-contempt? It is much more accurate, I

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believe, to credit those who endure depression with an especial bravery.

Because self-contempt is such a problem, some of us who are depressed don't credit ourselves with this bravery. But we know it when we see it. Clare had it. More accurately, she had had it. But bravery is a spiritual resource; it's consumable. Hers was used up. I was desperate to engage her or at least to distract her. That's why I loaned her William Styron's book. When Clare tossed the book on my bed, she called it a "crock." She pointed out that Styron was depressed for a few months, not many years like us. What she actually said is that he had a "candy-ass" depression.

I didn't interrupt. Why would I? I had wanted to distract Clare, and I had. She was angry. Anyway, I didn't disagree with her. Styron's book will almost certainly offend a veteran like Clare or me. He had a mild, relatively brief depression; he did not have to rely on anti-depressant medication, much less rely on a radical remedy such as electroconvulsive therapy; his hospital stay was at a place which is as comfortable as they come; and, crucially, he was never alone. It rankles us, no matter what the virtues of Styron's book may be, to feel he speaks for us.

Among us veterans, there is an unspoken understanding that we won't verify how bad it is. No war stories. But we do console one another. For whatever reasons—it must be a control thing—I have always been much, much better at providing consolation than accepting it. So I was surprised that I accepted so much from Clare—much more than anyone I'd met during numerous hospitalizations. Perhaps it was her gift of Quaker-like quietude. Or her huge sincerity. Or—could this have been?—perhaps I was falling in love with her and fantasized that we would get well together, or, failing that, we would, in any event, always be together holding hands and thereby verifying that even in hell we were not alone.

Clare died ten days later in her room, which was two doors from mine. So near but so impossibly far. I screamed almost hysterically at a nurse who felt it might make me feel better if I knew how ingenious she had been in taking her life. Goddam good intentions. The other patients asked that I say something at a memorial service they were putting together. I did, of course, although I did not directly discuss suicide, which may be one of those subjects you can understand only if you have been there. I have.

What happens, as I have experienced it, is that profound depression spontaneously turns upside-down, as it were, so that it suddenly seems perfectly clear that I should die. This is not tragic. It's the opposite. This is a good feeling, not euphoric but authentic and consoling. The relief is uncommonly welcome. Thus, suicide is terribly

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pernicious. My ultimate guardian—namely, myself—has not just gone off duty but, so much more dangerously, has become the advocate, the agent of destruction.

At the service for Clare, I said I believed depression was in significant measure a spiritual affliction: our lives had lost meaning. No one really knows how dark it is for someone else, or what bravery is required to go on living, or how it feels when one's spiritual resources are used up. What Clare would have hoped, I believed, was that each of us, her fellow patients, would attend more creatively to our own resources—most especially to how we can be renewed. We should be careful, I said as I stopped, because, make no mistake, down there, where we were, resources do get used up, which is awfully painful as well as perilous.

John P. Sisk

1914–1997

Contributor, THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR

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David's Buddha

MARTIN RYAN

Sits in the green splendor
Of its aging bronze
Gathering the morning light
In our large bay window
Overlooking the tree-shadowed lawn,
Serene in the silence of itself.

Someone has said,
"God comes to the hungry
In the form of food."
I said, "God comes to the alcoholic
In the form of sobriety."
This little Buddha says nothing
And much.

Perhaps the best
Works of art are all
A form of meditation
Evoking a beauty
That whispers of God.

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Rolls-Royce

How a Legend Was Made

PETER BOTTICELLI

THE LEGEND BEGAN IN ENGLAND WITH TWO MEN, the engineer and manufacturer Henry Royce and the racing driver Charles Rolls. Henry Royce, born in 1863, was the principal designer of all Rolls-Royce's products from the company's founding in 1906 until his death in 1933. Royce's life was an honest Victorian rags-to-riches story. His father died when Henry was still a young boy, and after attending school for fewer than three years, he was forced to quit and go to work as a newsboy. His engineering career began a few years afterward, with a job as an apprentice mechanic for the Great Northern Railway. His only formal education came from night classes at a polytechnic school in London. During the 1880s, in his twenties, Royce became a pioneer in the emerging electrical industry. By the early 1900s his firm, Royce Limited, based in Manchester, was a successful manufacturer of electric dynamos and cranes.

The background of Charles Rolls (1877–1910) could scarcely have been more different from that of Royce. Charlie was the third son of an aristocrat. He was schooled at Eton, where his love of machines earned him the nickname "Dirty Rolls." As an undergraduate at Cambridge, he owned one of the first automobiles in town. In 1902, Rolls became a car dealer in London, trading on his good looks and romantic image as a race car driver. At first he sold mainly French cars, then considered the best in the world.

Henry Royce built his first automobile in 1903. Typically, his interest in cars was practical: the crane business had fallen into a deep recession, and Henry was simply looking for a new product to sell. After purchasing a well-regarded French Decauville car, Royce had no doubt that he could design a superior product. In characteristic fashion, he tore the Decauville apart and then created a new automobile in keeping with his incomparably high engineering standards.

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This new "Royce," with two cylinders and ten horsepower, soon caught the eye of Charlie Rolls, who was eager to find a worthwhile English car he could bring to market. In May 1904, a legendary meeting was arranged between Rolls and Royce. The two men agreed to form a partnership in which Royce Limited would produce the cars and C. S. Rolls & Co. would be the exclusive selling agent. This agreement laid the groundwork for a new corporation, Rolls-Royce Limited, which was formally launched in 1906.

Like most fledgling automakers at this time, Rolls-Royce seemed to have none too bright a future. In its first year, the company made at least three different models, yet its total output was fewer than one hundred cars. An automobile magazine said that Rolls-Royce's prospects were "about as tangible as the Aurora Borealis. We cannot help thinking the promoters have made a very weak appeal to the investing public." Claude Johnson (1864–1926), who would play a vital role as the company's General Managing Director—and who has often been called the "hyphen in Rolls-Royce"—admitted that neither he nor Rolls nor Royce had "any qualification for the conduct of a large manufacturing undertaking. Frankly I am of the opinion that our names as Directors are more or less worthless."

Nevertheless, by the middle of 1907 the company had raised enough cash to build a new plant at Derby, England (located roughly in between Manchester and Birmingham). This enabled Rolls-Royce to expand production of a promising new six-cylinder car, which was called the "40/50" model. (For tax purposes the engine was rated at 40 horsepower, but in practice it actually ran at 50 and in later models at more than 100 horsepower.) The 40/50 model was to be Rolls-Royce's breakthrough, a legendary automobile the company would sell with only incremental changes until the 1930s. Just as the Model T shaped the Ford Motor Company, the 40/50 model set the tone for all of Rolls-Royce's future automobiles, even to this day. From the very beginning the 40/50 was hailed by the motoring press as the best-made car in the world.

As a marketing ploy, Claude Johnson named one of the first 40/50s the "Silver Ghost." It had genuine silver-plated fixtures and trim, and the body was given a bright silver finish. Soon after it was built, the Silver Ghost attracted national attention by completing an unprecedented fifteen-thousand-mile endurance test, driving up and down the British Isles, stopping only for petrol. Afterwards, the car was thoroughly inspected for signs of wear, and the total cost of repairs came to only a little more than two pounds. Soon all the 40/50 cars were being referred to as "Silver Ghosts," regardless of what color they were painted.

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The original Silver Ghost makes an impressive sight even today. The car is still owned by Rolls-Royce Motor Cars Limited and is periodically rolled out for publicity. It still runs, in fact, but since the car's insurance value runs into the millions, it is no longer driven long distances or, presumably, on Britain's motorways.

Claude Johnson's marketing strategy for the Silver Ghost was a critical turning point in the company's history. Heretofore Rolls-Royce's reputation as a carmaker had been built mainly on the racing exploits of Charles Rolls. In the early 1900s, long-distance road races and test trials were a popular, though very dangerous, sport. Charlie Rolls's ability to finish such contests underscored the durability and performance of Rolls-Royce cars. But this form of advertising was expensive, as racing still is today, and so by 1908–9 Johnson had concluded that Rolls-Royce should leave the racing scene altogether and instead concentrate on the more lucrative luxury-car market. Thus, it was the combination of Claude Johnson's salesmanship and Henry Royce's engineering perfectionism that gave Rolls-Royce its present brand image of customized elegance, comfort, and uncompromising quality.

Rolls himself did not object to the change, for by 1909 he actually had grown tired of the car business and had taken up an exciting new hobby, flying. He unsuccessfully lobbied the Rolls-Royce board of directors to acquire a British franchise to build the Wright Brothers' aircraft. Then, early in 1910, Rolls decided to resign from his day-to-day duties at Rolls-Royce and instead to form a new company dedicated to making airplanes. In July of that same year, however, Rolls was killed when his Wright Brothers biplane crashed during a flying competition at Bournemouth.

Claude Johnson went to great lengths to reinforce the aristocratic image he wanted for Rolls-Royce cars. For instance, it so happened that most Silver Ghosts were driven by chauffeurs rather than by the owners themselves. Hence, for customers, a test drive normally meant riding in the back while a Rolls-Royce chauffeur demonstrated the car's exceptionally smooth ride and quiet power. To ensure that his drivers made a positive impression, Johnson gave them a detailed list of instructions, including:

Politeness: When opening a door to allow a passenger to get into or out of a car, [chauffeurs] must touch their hats. They must always address customers as "Sir" or "Madam," unless they be titled people, when they must use the proper appellatives—such as to an Archbishop or Duke, "Yes your Grace," "Your Grace's car is here." To a Baron or Earl, "Yes, my Lord," "Your Lordship's car is waiting."

Filling up Petrol: They must fill up petrol at every opportunity (such as at

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meal times), so that there may be no possibility of a Rolls-Royce car being seen stopped on the road. The act of filling up at the road-side may be mistaken for a "breakdown"—to the damage of the Company.

Johnson also gave clear instructions on how Rolls-Royce chauffeurs were to drive:

Do not lounge in the driving seat, for it is bad style, and your ease will not be shared by the passengers. Do not indulge in "back chat" with drivers of other vehicles. This is an unpardonable impertinence on the part of the driver if passengers be on board, and should not be indulged in when they are alone, as it is desired that all the Company's servants should at all times maintain the dignity of the Company.

Certainly Johnson's most lasting contributions to the Rolls-Royce mystique were the "classical" radiator design and the winged-lady mascot, called the Spirit of Ecstasy. In 1911 he commissioned an artist, Charles Sykes, to design the famed hood ornament. As a former art student himself, Johnson wanted a distinguishing mark that would be graceful, refined, and highly visible at the same time. He also managed to veto Royce's wish to replace the radiator grille with something more aerodynamic. No Spirit of Ecstasy would appear on the cars Royce drove himself.

In the early days of the auto business, many carmakers produced only the chassis and engine, leaving the body and interior to be supplied by coach-making firms left over from the horse-drawn carriage days. This arrangement did not last long with mass producers like Ford and General Motors, who found it more profitable to make their own bodywork. However, Rolls-Royce owners demanded a truly custom-made product, and so it made sense for Rolls-Royce to concentrate its efforts on the engine and chassis, while Britain's venerable coach-making firms indulged their customers' taste for expensive details and refinements. With one-off coachwork by a firm such as Barker or Hooper, a Silver Ghost chassis became a brilliant hybrid of up-to-date technology and ancient craftsmanship. The firm of Barker had been in business since the early 1700s and had a long association with royalty in Britain.

For his part, Royce firmly believed that customers demanded an engine and chassis as customized and as finely crafted as any bodywork. Thus, each new chassis was given a card inscribed with the customer's name along with a detailed list of any special features he or she might want. On occasion, a customer's special requests could take up several pages. So personalized was the Rolls-Royce approach to making cars that, in the words of a longtime Rolls-Royce employee, "the cars were referred to by their future owners' names as they pro-

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gressed along the assembly line. These names read like a page out of Debrett's *Peerage*: His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, the Duke of Westminster, the Maharajah of Patiala, and so on."

If it was Claude Johnson who determined the public image of Rolls-Royce, it must be said that the company's internal culture was set very much by Henry Royce. To this day, many employees continue to be in awe of "Father" Royce's fanatical devotion to work and anything connected with engines and machines. Today his picture adorns many office walls, while a large statue of him sits in the parking lot outside company headquarters in Derby.

One story told through the years was that one day Royce was touring the factory and came across a group of workmen standing outside a lavatory. He asked what they were doing, and they replied that they were waiting for a plumber to arrive to fix the drain. Royce then rolled up his sleeves, unblocked the drain with his bare hands, and then informed the men that they had better get back to work.

As early as 1909, when he was in his mid-forties, Royce's habitual overwork led to serious concerns about his health. The board of directors was warned that Royce's disregard for his own well-being was a serious threat to the future of the company. At the same time, Royce's obsession with quality made it difficult for the factory to turn out cars at all. At any moment he might stroll through the factory and fire someone on the spot for failing to meet his standards. Under Royce's fearsome gaze, the disgraced employee would be escorted to the front gate, whereupon, at least in some cases, he would be spirited around to the back door and returned to work once Royce had left the scene.

Concerns about Royce's health became justified in 1911, when he was diagnosed as having intestinal cancer. He made a fine recovery after surgery, but it was clear to all that Royce should adopt a less arduous routine. Eventually the board of directors convinced Henry to relinquish all administrative duties, freeing him to concentrate on engineering design. He also agreed to spend as much time as possible away from Derby. So, for the remaining two decades of his career, Royce spent winters on the French Riviera and summers in the southern English countryside, with his design staff in attendance. Amazingly, this odd arrangement did nothing to lessen Royce's tight grip on the company. As many witnesses have explained, an afternoon on the lawn at Royce's country house was no holiday. Over cups of tea, Royce and his staff would spend hour after hour discussing brakes or, say, carburetors. No time for tennis or croquet. If an unsuspecting visitor drove up in a car other than a Rolls-Royce, he would be bombarded by questions concerning every aspect of its performance.

Rolls-Royce was a profitable and rapidly growing company in its

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early years, but World War I forced a sudden change in Rolls-Royce's entire business outlook. Just after the war broke out in August 1914, it appeared that the factory might be forced to shut down until peace was restored. Even before government rationing took effect, the demand for new cars fell nearly to zero. Many thought the company was ruined. Claude Johnson's assessment of the situation was that "a week ago the business was worth a very large sum of money. I cannot say whether when the bank opens again the bankers may not take the view that Rolls-Royce is worth nothing at all."

The only chance seemed to be to convert the factory to manufacturing war materials. Rolls-Royce was given contracts to make shell casings and ambulance wagons. The army also made use of the Silver Ghost as a staff car. Before the war, the Royal Family had preferred Daimlers, but since Daimler was originally a German company, King George agreed to ride in a Silver Ghost until the end of the war. The 40/50 chassis proved strong enough to make into armored cars. These strange-looking vehicles were praised by none other than T. E. Lawrence, who used them in his desert campaigns in the Middle East.

But the demand for armored cars and other military equipment was not nearly sufficient to keep the Derby factory running. The logical solution, Henry Royce quickly realized, was to make aero engines. However, the board of directors balked at the idea of making aero engines because of the heavy investment that would be required—money Rolls-Royce simply did not have. The money, like the orders, would have to come from the British government.

In reality, the government decided on its own that the Derby plant would be used to manufacture existing aero engine designs under license. Royce, however, was not at all impressed by the government's engines, including an air-cooled Renault. Claiming that they were all inferior, he threw himself headlong into the job of designing a new engine from scratch. By early 1915, Royce's new liquid-cooled 225-horsepower V-12 "Eagle" engine was ready for testing. Deliveries to the military were being made within a year, and the Rolls-Royce Eagle engine quickly established itself as Britain's best engine of the war. By 1918, Rolls-Royce was making about 50 engines a week, with plans to increase production to 100 a week and ultimately to 250.

By the end of the war, the mystique of Rolls-Royce had been firmly implanted in the British psyche. The company had begun to present itself as a keeper of the national trust, with Henry Royce as a genuine hero. An aviation writer claimed that "one of the best things in British engineering is that we have a certain class of man who cares more about getting the best out of an article than he does about getting the most money out of it. These men are artists rather than commercial

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engineers, and in motor engineering Mr. Royce is a fine example of the engineering artist."

This exalted view of Royce fit perfectly with the image Claude Johnson was seeking for Rolls-Royce Limited. Whether the firm was selling luxury cars to aristocrats or aero engines to the military, Johnson chose to play down the fact that Rolls-Royce was a private firm that existed to make money for its shareholders. Most of all, he was determined to avoid Rolls-Royce being labeled a "merchant of death" for its wartime profits. "I do not believe that it is our duty," Johnson said, "to use our wits to take out of the taxpayer's pocket the highest possible price for the supply of goods which are devised to bring this war to an end."

With the success of the Eagle engine, Johnson publicized Royce's passion and talent for engineering. This wholesome image received a spectacular boost in June 1919, when a Vickers Vimy airplane, powered by Rolls-Royce Eagle engines, made the first non-stop flight across the Atlantic.

In public, at least, Royce played up to his image. In 1930, he was made a baronet for his service to the nation. (He was thereafter called Sir Henry.) To mark the occasion, he sent an open letter to all of the employees, thanking them for their efforts. He expressed his hope that "Great Britain with its fine reputation for [products] of lasting quality will not descend to making low quality goods because prices are too low to meet the cost." He had once said that "it is the first principle of good trading *to give good value for money*, and if you are posing as making the best, see that your buyers get it. We must knock over any conditions that get in our way."

Privately, however, Royce was very much a business realist. Once the war was over, the aero engine business fell off dramatically, forcing Rolls-Royce to once again concentrate on the luxury car market. Royce worried that the company might have no choice but to mass produce a cheaper car in order to stay afloat in what was an increasingly competitive industry. In the interwar years, updated versions of the Silver Ghost and the Phantom I and II sold fewer than 500 cars a year. The Phantom III, a substantially new design introduced in 1936, averaged just over 150 per year between 1936 and the outbreak of World War II. Ford and General Motors in this era were already producing cars by the million. Thanks to heavy capital investment, such American brands as Cadillac were fast gaining on Rolls-Royce in quality and performance.

Ultimately, Rolls-Royce's survival in the 1930s and 1940s was ensured by the aero engine business. In the late 1920s, Rolls-Royce was chosen to design a racing engine for an important international flying

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competition, the Schneider Cup. The "R" engine (for "racing"), as it was called, enabled Britain to win the trophy in 1929 and to retire it for good with another win in 1931. The engine was so powerful, it was used to set speed records not only in the air, but also on land and on water.

Henry Royce at first had been ambivalent about taking on the R engine project, since it held little apparent commercial potential. However, Sir Henry relished the chance to show the world that "*we are* SOUND *engineers rather than freak inventors.*" A total of only twenty R engines were manufactured, but Royce's design was a crucial step forward in technology. It led directly to the design of the 27-liter Merlin aero engine in 1933, which was destined to become the most important product in Rolls-Royce's history.

After Royce's death in 1933, the company went through a painful transition, until new leadership was installed in 1937. A leader as forceful as Sir Henry is always difficult to replace, but in this case Rolls-Royce was fortunate to have in Ernest Hives an executive in the ranks who proved to be every bit Royce's equal. In 1902, the story goes, the sixteen-year-old Ernest Hives had been working in a bicycle shop in his hometown of Reading, just outside London. One day Charles Rolls's car broke down as he was passing through town, and Rolls came into the bicycle shop for assistance. Young Ernest promptly fixed the car, and Rolls was so impressed by Hives's mechanical skills that he hired the boy on the spot as his personal mechanic. In 1908 Hives, now twenty-two years old, joined Rolls-Royce.

Like Sir Henry, Hives was an indefatigable worker. He also displayed a remarkable grasp of all aspects of the business, from engineering to administration to sales. After Royce moved away from Derby in 1911, Hives's role in the company grew rapidly. He established the company's Experimental Department. In Royce's absence, he also became responsible for much of the company's production engineering. This experience proved invaluable during the critical years before and during the Second World War. In fact, during the twenty years he served as General Manager and then Chairman, Hives's influence within the company, and maybe his personal legend as well, eventually came to surpass even that of Henry Royce.

Rolls-Royce was very much in need of Hives's leadership in 1937. The growing demand for aero engines under rearmament necessitated a dramatic restructuring and expansion of the firm. The challenge was made more difficult, as Hives noted in early 1937, by the fact that for many years Henry Royce had "personally made all the decisions as regards engineering policy and design. Most of our present staff of designers worked with him at his private house, so that for

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twenty or twenty-five years they were never asked or expected to take any responsibility." Hives's own keen understanding of aero-engine technology enabled him to control the organization thoroughly until his retirement in 1957. Each Monday he presided over a large meeting of the engineering staff, at which he was famous for asking tough questions and giving detailed orders, which he never appeared to forget.

As a manager, Ernest Hives strongly emphasized teamwork, but with the condtion that a strong leader, usually he himself, always be firmly in charge. A company such as Rolls-Royce, which consisted mainly of engineers and skilled mechanics, was far more complicated to manage than mass-production firms like General Motors, which depended on thousands of unskilled workers. Hives wrote in 1939 that "the Rolls-Royce factory at Derby has been built and developed around the problem of producing high-class engineering in relatively small quantities with the capacity to change or modify the product quickly. In other words, I should describe the Derby factory as a huge development factory rather than a manufacturing plant."

Nevertheless, World War II forced Rolls-Royce to change its whole business outlook; it adopted mass production techniques and unskilled labor in a furious effort to turn out enough Merlin engines to keep the British Royal Air Force in the skies. Between 1939 and 1946, the company made no automobiles at all, and yet it managed to produce more than 80,000 aero engines, four times as many as it had made in all previous years combined. The company's workforce grew from 12,500 in 1939 to almost 60,000 by 1944.

Merlin engines powered some of the most famous aircraft of the war, including the renowned British Spitfire fighter. Rolls-Royce worked closely with the Supermarine company in the development of this plane, which was heavier and better armed than previous fighters, and thus required a much more powerful engine. The Merlin was also used in the Hawker Hurricane, which did even more fighting in 1940 than the Spitfire. The Merlin was eventually selected for the P-51 Mustang, one of the most effective American fighter planes of the war.

In 1940, during the Blitz, Rolls-Royce operated on twelve-hour shifts. Ernest Hives would have asked employees to work even longer hours had he not been bound by wartime labor regulations. During the Battle of Britain, he issued the following message:

To All Rolls-Royce Workers:

"NEVER IN THE FIELD OF HUMAN CONFLICT WAS SO MUCH OWED BY SO MANY TO SO FEW" said the Prime Minister recently. He was referring to the R.A.F. Pilots, but his words are equally applicable to all who work

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in the Rolls-Royce factories. I am appreciative for all that has been done, and the whole country is grateful for it, but there is such a great responsibility on all Rolls-Royce workers that **THERE MUST BE NO LETTING UP, EVEN AT THE EXPENSE OF PERSONAL COMFORT.**

"WORK UNTIL IT HURTS" must be our slogan!

Hives's resourcefulness and determination to cut through red tape paid off in many ways for Rolls-Royce and the British military during the war. A prime example was the Cromwell Tank, which, with Rolls-Royce's help, became the British Army's most effective tank in the war. In 1941 Hives proposed to Lord Beaverbrook, one of the highest-ranking officials in the mobilization effort, that Rolls-Royce should take over the technical development of the Cromwell tank chassis as well as the engine. As a condition for taking on this new responsibility, Hives insisted that Rolls-Royce would need a million pounds immediately and "no interference." The answer came in a telegram from Lord Beaverbrook: "The British Government has given you an open credit of one million pounds. This is a certificate of character and reputation without precedent or equal."

In aerial combat, the Merlin engine proved to be a mechanical triumph, but even in the early stages of the war it was clear that piston-driven aero engines were becoming technologically obsolete. In 1939, Germany and Britain were the only countries with the technical capability to develop and build a practical jet engine. By 1942 the German Messerschmitt 262 became the world's first operational jet airplane. Had the Germans pushed this plane into quantity production sooner, it could have severely hurt Britain's air defenses and even forestalled the Allied invasion of Europe in 1944.

Rolls-Royce had already begun research on a jet engine in 1938, but by 1940 Hives realized that another design, by RAF officer Frank Whittle, was likely to be first to reach the production stage. Thus, for the good of the war effort, Hives dropped Rolls-Royce's own jet project and directed his engineers to help Whittle and his team.

However, in 1941 it was the Rover corporation, and not Rolls-Royce, which was chosen to manufacture the Whittle engine in quantity for the RAF. Rolls-Royce agreed to help Rover as a subcontractor. But then, in November 1942, Hives proposed an ingenious swap, in which Rolls-Royce would get the jet in exchange for the Merlin-derived tank engine Rolls-Royce had designed. The offer was accepted over dinner in a pub, with only three people in attendance: Hives, Rover's chairman, and a Rolls-Royce engineer named Stanley Hooker, who later became the firm's chief engineer on jets. Hooker later recalled that "there was no talk of money, and no talk of getting government agreement to the arrangement." In hindsight, the deal was an

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excellent strategic move by Hives, but what made it possible was the extraordinary sense of cooperation and trust that existed in British industry during the war. Firms that had been fierce competitors suddenly found themselves working together at all levels, sharing their most carefully guarded secrets.

After 1945, Rolls-Royce had both the technical skill and the desire to compete globally in the emerging aerospace industry. The company did resume automobile production, of course, but the enormous growth of the war years meant that cars would now be a relatively small part of the overall business.

To ensure that its cars would be profitable in the post-war era, substantial efforts were made to reduce production costs while maintaining the exclusivity of the Rolls-Royce and Bentley names. Perhaps the single biggest change from before the war was that Rolls-Royce gradually began manufacturing its own car bodies to standard designs. By the 1950s and 1960s, it became rare to see a non-standard body on a Rolls-Royce car. Ultimately, however, production costs mattered little compared to price for Rolls-Royce. After the war, the Rolls-Royce Phantom name was reserved for some of the most exclusive and expensive automobiles on the planet. The Phantom IV, for instance, introduced in the 1950s, had a total production run of eighteen. One of these vehicles was purchased by Queen Elizabeth. The rest were sold to foreign governments. Even the best-selling Rolls-Royce model in the company's history, the Silver Shadow, accounted for fewer than 30,000 cars sold between 1965 and 1980.

In the aero engine business, Rolls-Royce prospered after World War II, but only in the face of severe competition and by taking enormous risks. The key moment came in 1968, when Rolls-Royce won an exclusive contract with the American company Lockheed to build engines for the L-1011. The project required immense financial support from the British government. Anthony Wedgwood (Tony) Benn, Labour's Technology Minister at that time, later said that his decision to back the RB-211 was directly influenced by the historic stature of Rolls-Royce: "I was dealing with not only the most famous British engineering company, but a company that had a blue-chip reputation. I would not have done this with any tinpot company."

In spite of the government backing, the RB-211's start-up costs proved staggering. In early February 1971, the company was forced into receivership. The news came as a great shock to Lockheed, which was itself reported to be in serious financial trouble. It was equally surprising to London financial circles, for until this time Rolls-Royce had never before reported a loss, even in the depths of the Great Depression.

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Politically, neither the RB-211 project nor Rolls-Royce as a company could be allowed to die. For the Conservative government, it was a matter of jobs, for Rolls-Royce at the time employed, directly or indirectly, well over 80,000 people. It was also a matter of national prestige, for Roll-Royce was the only enterprise outside the United States or the Soviet Union capable of developing a large jet engine by itself. Then, too, it was a matter of national defense. Many RAF planes, including the famed Harrier "jump-jet," carried Rolls-Royce-built engines. The Royal Navy also depended on Rolls-Royce marine engines to power much of its surface fleet as well as the submarines that provided Britain's nuclear deterrent. Thus, the government was forced to buy out Rolls-Royce, assuming full liability for the company's debts and providing the extra capital needed to launch the RB-211.

After taking over Rolls-Royce in 1971, the British government decided to sell off those parts of the business that, while profitable, were not considered strategic to the national interest. The car division, plus another unit that made diesel engines, was spun off as an independent firm which later came to be known as Rolls-Royce Motor Cars Limited. This new company was eventually acquired by Vickers. Rolls-Royce Motor Cars has continued to produce fewer than 3,000 cars a year on average. In the mid-1990s, a Rolls-Royce Silver Spur was priced at almost $180,000, while a Bentley Azure convertible sold for more than $300,000. The cars are still built with many extraordinary custom features.

Despite the sale of the car business, the original firm centered in Derby (originally called Rolls-Royce Limited, now Rolls-Royce plc) has maintained exclusive rights to the Rolls-Royce name and logo. While Vickers owns the Spirit of Ecstasy statue and the famed radiator design, as well as the Bentley trademarks, it uses the Rolls-Royce name only by permission. In spite of all the changes over the years, the company founded by Charles Rolls and Henry Royce continues to uphold the name and the legend of Rolls-Royce.

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Contemplating the Sublime

EDWARD ROTHSTEIN

WHILE WRITING HIS FIFTH SYMPHONY, Gustav Mahler wondered how listeners would respond to the brooding, obsessively churning motifs that seem to chase one another into ecstasy or wearily wind down into despair. "How should [the public] react," he asked, "to this chaos that is eternally giving birth to a world that then perishes in the next moment, to these primordial sounds, to this blustering, bellowing, roaring ocean, to these dancing stars, to these shimmering, flashing, breathing waves?" His Eighth Symphony, the Symphony of a Thousand, makes that question sound almost modest. With its intended number of players, it is a precursor to Cinemascope and the Sony Imax. But the technology has not yet been invented that can reproduce the sensation that Mahler was after with his settings of a ninth-century Latin hymn and another sacred text for German Romantics, the last scene of Goethe's "Faust." Mahler was in competition with the gods. "These no longer are human voices," he wrote of his chorus, "rather planets and suns that are circling."

Extreme, no doubt, just as the symphony is an extreme example of what might be called the musical sublime. But the extreme is partly what the sublime is all about, and Mahler's goals actually fit into a tradition of Western music in which sound is meant to reproduce the effect of nature's spectaculars. In fact, the more we look at the concert music of the last two centuries, the more it seems as if the sublime was one of its primary preoccupations. Certainly, the ambition to overwhelm the senses and mind was there in Beethoven's Ninth, in Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique,* in Bruckner's Eighth, in Lizst's B Minor Sonata. During their time, Haydn and Mozart were also described as having similar power. Haydn's setting of the words "Let there be light" in his *Creation* was for many decades considered a prime example of the sublime. Much of the music at the heart of the Western tradition seems to yearn for the sublime's imposing grandeur and humbling effect.

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And, of course, the yearning is not just music's alone. Examples are plentiful from the Romantic period: the paintings of Caspar David Friedrich, for example, with their images of high mountain peaks and swirling mist, in which a lone human figure is dwarfed by the immensity of nature. Or there is the sublime as chronicled in one of Immanuel Kant's few descriptive passages: "Prominent, overhanging, menacing cliffs, towering storm clouds from which come lightning flashes and thunderclaps as they roll by, volcanoes in their destructive violence, hurricanes leaving devastation in their trail, the boundless, raging ocean, a lofty waterfall on some mighty river, all render our capacity to resist insignificantly small in comparison to their power." Or, more movingly, the effect of the sublime captured in the poetry of Wordsworth:

> And I have felt
> A presence that disturbs me with the joy
> Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean and the living air,
> And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
> A motion and a spirit, that impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
> And rolls through all things.

For all the glory of this language, the transporting indulgences of Mahler's music, and Kant's celebration of inclement weather, with a few contemporary exceptions, we haven't tended to think much about the sublime these days. It may lie at the heart of the modern Western artistic tradition—and I believe it does—but I don't think anybody has recently made the argument that it does. The sublime seems, somehow, too archaic a concept, like "charm" or "wisdom." It seems soft, impressionistic, conveying a sensation that is now of little importance except in understanding some historical varieties of romanticism. In fact, in comparison with the ideas of form and evolutionary development that now dominate speculation about biology and science, the sublime seems almost the opposite—not a matter of architectonics but of formlessness. The sublime can seem to be something that is over the top, lacking boundary or sense, overwhelming partly because it seems ungraspable, rather in poor taste.

Yet in the heyday of European romanticism, the sublime was of crucial importance; it was a major cultural preoccupation and was discussed by philosophers in great analytic detail. It was considered an essential part of understanding the nature of the mind itself. In the

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sublime, we are granted an unusual glimpse of the relationship between disorder and order, and its effect on the mind attempting to create one out of the other. It may be that the sublime provides an important model, an extreme case, of how we come to understand the world. Certainly, if we take a look at how the sublime was traditionally described, it is not formlessness or emotion that is invoked, but precisely the opposite. The word *sublime* probably comes from Latin roots, *sub* meaning up to, and *limen* meaning threshold or doorway. This etymology implies that the sublime involves standing on the edge of something, at an opening perhaps, gazing out at a scene (the same roots later gave us the word *subliminal*, which means below the threshold of awareness; the sublime is far above that threshold).

The early uses of the word implied a sense of standing at a distance, in an almost detached manner, viewing something through a frame. But from that threshold, one would see something exalted, as if looking down on an otherworldly landscape from a grand perspective. A sublime point of view would be one that would allow you to create a map of that landscape. What from the ground could seem random or unstructured would, sublimely viewed, take on an extraordinary order. This transcendent viewpoint was also thought to have an effect on the mind itself, which reacts to the vision being offered to it. In earlier accounts of the sublime, the effect was not of astonishment or bewilderment, but of heightened rational powers. The famous treatise on the sublime by an author once thought to be Longinus, describes the sublime as "boldness and grandeur of thought."

In 1694, in fact, the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française* defined *sublime* as "Exalted, lofty. The term is only used in connection with spiritual matters that concern the intellect: thus, a man of sublime virtue, a sublime genius, a sublime spirit, a sublime thought, a sublime style, the sublime sciences, the most sublime understanding." Seventy years later the perspective on the sublime had changed slightly, becoming more self-conscious: now it refers not just to the quality of mind or vision, but to the experience of that quality, the self-consciousness that is felt in experiencing the sublime. This is partly the aspect of detachment implicit in the word's origins, but it is also a sign of an even more abstract perspective, one that takes an additional step back to see not just the sublime view, but the way in which the mind understands the sublime. Diderot and d'Alembert's classic *Encyclopédie* defined the sublime as "that which lifts us above ourselves and which at the same time makes us aware of our exalted state." The sublime, in this view, can provide a form of education, elevating conscious awareness; the sublime is a spur to the mind, guiding it to greater perception.

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That view came to dwell side by side with something closer to what we imagine today, in which the sublime seems to undercut ordinary reason. Burke wrote in the 1740s that when confronting the sublime "the mind is so entirely filled with its object that it cannot entertain any other, nor by consequence reason on that object which employs it." The sublime creates an overwhelming "astonishment." In the 1790s, Johann Georg Sulzer, a Swiss mathematician and philosopher, wrote that the sublime "works on us with hammer-blows; it seizes us and irresistibly overwhelms us." It is the "highest thing that there is in art." The sublime, it would seem, has a double motion with regard to the observing mind. It relies upon reason—and confounds it.

The sublime was also generally seen as both a counterpart and a contrast to the beautiful. Both were properties of art and nature that had profound effects on the observer; both seemed to have something to do with the intrinsic nature of the object observed and to the internal life of the observing mind. And while they could, at times, seem similar, the concepts were meticulously dissected for differences. Burke could almost have been making a chart in his famous philosophical essay on the sublime: the sublime was vast, beauty small; the sublime rugged, beauty smooth; the sublime dark and gloomy, beauty transparent and illuminated; the sublime masculine, beauty feminine; the sublime could create a sensation resembling pain, beauty only pleasure.

But what have these contrasts to do with the nature of the mind experiencing these sensations and the almost paradoxical relationship the sublime seems to have with respect to reason and form? Kant argued that when we determine that an object is beautiful, any consideration of "interest" is irrelevant. The judgment of beauty, in his description, is a detached judgment. It has nothing to do with the usefulness of an object, or its monetary value, or anything else. The beautiful object may inspire a desire to possess it—or understand it—but the judgment of its beauty is untainted by other concern. Whether we gaze at a night scene of a mountain's peak or listen to a Mozart piano concerto, whether we are contemplating Newtonian mechanics or quantum physics, insofar as we make an aesthetic judgment, we have no other interests. Pure aesthetic judgment, for Kant, is as detached and as devoted to abstraction as is mathematical thinking.

When we are gazing at an object, we do not think of our judgment of its beauty as a mere assertion of taste; we do not emphasize the relative aspects of our experience—the time of day, the particular moment in cultural and historical life, the mood of the viewer. Instead, we feel beauty to be universal, beyond the reach of time or fashion or whim. Rather than remaining particular, the experience

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becomes abstract; the instant becomes an instance of something general. Judgment of beauty is an exercise in discerning something we feel to be absolute, beyond the ravages of time or the influence of interest.

There is also something about beauty that is both private, because it involves silent feeling, and public, because it makes us feel as if it is revealing something universal. It emphasizes both our isolation and our feelings of common sense and sensibility. Beauty is not an idiosyncratic judgment—or so we think and feel—but something more fundamental. Beauty feels like an aspect of public knowledge. We may not actually assert that everyone will agree with our proclamation of beauty, but beauty inspires a feeling that everyone *should* agree. The feeling makes a claim not only on us, as we view the beautiful object, but on our sense of others. This doesn't mean that taste is universal, or that beauty is a purely objective fact; the only assertion is that the judgment of beauty is treated as objective and felt as objective.

Kant also suggests that when we judge something to be beautiful, we are making another kind of assertion about it. We judge it to have something "purposive" about it. We treat it as if it were made for our contemplation. Knit into the experience of the beautiful is the experience of judging something to be "well made"—even if we don't believe that any kind of a deity actually made it. What is important is that at the very moment such beauty becomes apparent to us, the world appears as if it were constructed according to some purpose. Or better: the world appears as if it were well suited to human perception and understanding, as if nature were constructed specifically for our contemplation. Kant referred to this as regarding nature "after the analogy of art."

This means that when we approach a beautiful object we do not treat it as if it were accidentally and haphazardly constructed. We sense an order, a set of relations, that seems to suggest design. As Darwinians remind us again and again, the existence of an extraordinary design doesn't mean the object was purposely designed; sophisticated organisms, and even the brain itself, can seem designed without being so, but in comprehending the object's workings, and appreciating its beauty, we act just as if it were designed. Why, we ask, is this part here and not there; what contribution does it make to the workings of the whole? What relationship does it have to other parts? Is it essential or irrelevant? These are questions that may subliminally lie behind a judgment of beauty. We treat an object as if nothing about it was accidental, as if every element had a function serving the whole, as if even the whole had a function—part of which is to create our understanding of the object's beauty.

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In fact, this attitude, which accepts a purposiveness without asserting a purpose is actually very familiar in mathematics and the sciences in which objects in the world are studied to disclose a design or order. There is a close connection between aesthetic judgment and the creation of well-made theories. The testimony is compelling. The mathematician Hermann Weyl wrote: "My work always tried to unite the true with the beautiful; but when I had to choose one or the other, I usually chose the beautiful." G. H. Hardy, who wrote one of the most beautifully written memoirs by a mathematician, asserted more dogmatically: "There is no permanent place in the world for ugly mathematics." And here is Bertrand Russell: "Mathematics, rightly viewed, possesses not only truth, but supreme beauty—a beauty cold and austere, like that of sculpture. . . . The true spirit of delight, the exaltation, the sense of being more than man, which is the touchstone of the highest excellence, is to be found in mathematics as surely as in poetry." Paul Dirac once proposed that if his theory were beautiful and an experiment proved it questionable, he would tend to doubt the experiment more than the theory.

There are even elements of the sublime that are invoked in discussions of abstract reasoning. The mathematician Charles Hermite wrote of one of his teachers: "Those who have had the good fortune to be students of the great mathematician cannot forget the almost religious accent of his teaching, the shudder of beauty or mystery that he sent through his audience, at some admirable discovery or before the unknown."

It might seem peculiar to be bringing in such imprecise sentiments in talking about a subject that insists upon clarity and precision. But as I have argued in *Emblems of Mind,* that is part of the point: the judgment of beauty and the creation of a theory are related activities: a theory discloses beauty; a judgment of beauty helps create a theory. A theory establishes order, defines conditions, shows the relationship between parts and whole. It explains things, but it also discovers things, revealing unexpected connections. "You must have felt this too," Werner Heisenberg said to Albert Einstein, "the almost frightening simplicity and wholeness of the relationships which nature suddenly spreads out before us and for which none of us was in the least prepared." J. W. N. Sullivan, a mathematician who also wrote a beautiful book about Beethoven's string quartets, explained: "Since the primary object of the scientific theory is to express the harmonies which are found to exist in nature, we see at once that these theories must have an aesthetic value. The measure of the success of a scientific theory is, in fact, a measure of its aesthetic value, since it is a measure of the extent to which it has introduced harmony in what was before

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chaos." He went even further: "The measure in which science falls short of art is the measure in which it is incomplete as science."

But can we specify what such a measure would be? How do we measure beauty? Or what measurements take part in its assessment? We know that something is being compared, that something is being judged well made, well constructed, seeming well suited to its place in the world. We know, too, that we see this so clearly and precisely that we are ready to assert that this is an objective assessment, beyond doubt or question. The assessment seems to involve comparisons internal to the object as well as references outside of it.

When we make internal comparisons, we are involved in the discernment of "ratio." In *The Geometry of Art and Life,* Matila Ghyka points out that a ratio is "the quantitative comparison between two things or aggregates belonging to the same kind or species." A ratio, that is, is an internal comparison within a given universe. It involves a mapping between two objects in that universe and a number. We can have a ratio between lines (measuring length) or spaces (measuring area); we can have a ratio between dangers (measuring probabilities of disaster); we can even have a ratio between sounds (measuring frequencies). A ratio requires a "space" of objects, and it requires a measure that we use to comprehend these objects. Establishing a ratio is already, then, a very sophisticated act of the mind. It requires comparison between one object and another, a measurement of their relationship, and an assessment of their differences and similarities. We can go further: ratio is at the root of rationality. It is an act of reason that is not divisive but connective, showing relations between distinct objects. It is the kind of comparison that is at the heart of what we call rational.

Because creating a ratio means giving a number to these relations, it also allows us to compare different categories and worlds, not just objects within a single world. We do this by identifying their numbers. We can link ratios within a single universe, of course, saying that rectangles of different size but the same shape have sides in identical ratios or by saying that the ratio between areas of two squares is identical to the square of the ratios of their sides. But we can go further. The ratio of "2," for example, could apply to lengths of a line, populations in different countries, or the frequency of pitches on a piano. We can say the ratio of the lengths of two lines is equivalent to the ratio of two frequencies of vibration, and we have thus made a connection between pitch and the lengths of vibrating strings. When compared in this way, ratio becomes something more profound; it is being treated as a proportion.

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A proportion is even more powerful than a ratio: it can show the similarities between different worlds; it can demonstrate similarities and relationships that are shared by two distinct universes. When we judge beauty, we are, to a certain extent, establishing ratios and then using these ratios to disclose proportions.

Consider, for example, the Golden Ratio—a number that the Greeks thought created beautiful proportions in a rectangle. For a ratio to be golden, the divided parts of a whole must have the same relationship as a part and the whole. The golden ratio sets up a proportion between internal divisions and external comparisons.

It may have even been a Pythagorean belief that this divine proportion established a connection from the human body (which, as the Renaissance artists and the ancients believed, tends to be divided in "divine" proportions by the navel) to the universe itself (which was supposed to have a structure like one of the five regular solids, the dodecahedron, itself suffused, like its two-dimensional relation, the pentagon, with Golden Ratios).

Kepler thought the ratio crucial even in his studies of the heavens. "Geometry has two great treasures," he wrote. "One is the Theorem of Pythagoras; the other, the division of a line into extreme and mean [Golden] ratio. The first we may compare to a measure of gold; the second we may name a precious jewel." The Divine Proportion has been traced in the plans of Gothic cathedrals and Renaissance paintings, and even, more recently, in the work of the painter Seurat who was fascinated with its properties. The Golden Rectangle is probably judged to be beautiful because our eyes sense that the proportion replicates itself within itself. If a square formed using one side of the rectangle is removed, the remaining rectangle has the same dimensions as the original. The eye senses in this shape its continuous internal recurrence. There is a stability in its dimensions, a piquant restfulness, as the ratios can be imagined reproducing themselves within it, again and again.

The power of the ratio goes still further since it makes a link between the act of addition and the act of multiplication, between lengthening a line and increasing area. It is thus often found in the natural world where growth is regular over time. The divine proportion governs the shape of snail shells that retain a similar shape while increasing in size; it governs the turns of leaves on stems, the array of seeds in a sunflower, even the proportions of the human face. It is recurrent in organic forms, but it rarely occurs in the inorganic world where supplement is more important than self-generation.

The proportion also precisely demonstrates what is so crucial about the establishment of proportions in the creation of the beautiful. A

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proportion is a mapping, a connection. It links worlds and explains them. The proportion, rhetorically, is an analogy, which has its roots in the Greek word *analogia* which was actually used to refer to proportion. As Ghyka points out, the Greeks and Romans, and the Gothic and Renaissance builders who followed in their tradition, used repeated proportions and analogies in their architecture. A ratio between dimensions was never accidental and always echoed other ratios throughout the plan. Structures contained internal resonances, echoes and repetitions. The term *symmetry* meant much more than simple mirror identity between two parts; it referred to equivalent proportions.

Vitruvius, the great Roman theoretician of architecture, wrote: "Symmetry resides in the correlation by measurement between the various elements of the plan, and between each of these elements and the whole." Vitruvius compared the symmetry of building with the symmetry of the human body: "It proceeds from proportion—the proportion which the Greeks called analogia—[it achieves] consonance between every part and the whole." Proportion, he explained, "is a correspondence among the measures of the members of an entire work, and of the whole to a certain part selected as standard." A building built with proportion and symmetry in mind is generated by that standard. Vitruvius defined the aesthetic importance of such proportion: "When every important part of the building is thus conveniently set in proportion by the right correlation between height and width, between width and depth, and when all these parts have also their place in the total symmetry of the building, we obtain eurhythmy." This notion of symmetry and "eurhythmy" is close to what we call, in other contexts, "harmony."

In later centuries, the analogies between parts and other parts and between parts and whole became the foundation of mystical beliefs in analogy upon which the notion of magic depends. In magic, one object becomes an analogy for another (like a voodoo doll for the human body); alter one object and the magic acts similarly on the other. Proportion, in these beliefs, can become a magical identification of parts and influence.

The implications of this for understanding scientific thinking are important, for similar procedures occur. In mathematics we create patterns that make sense out of what we are presented with; we connect different examples, creating analogies that reveal some underlying property. These analogies might then be gathered into still greater analogies. We might, for example, come to imagine an abstract geometric triangle by comparing different early examples, discerning their shared essence. We speak of beauty in mathematical argument

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when those analogies show us relations we have never seen before, making sense out of diversity, simplifying complexity by revealing structure. In doing mathematics we are, at least metaphorically, finding proportions, identifying ratios, creating mappings between different instances of the same pattern, linking different worlds. Mathematics and much of science use analogy and proportion in their arguments.

Music is similar: it seems to refine the act of discerning the beautiful. Comprehending a composition means making internal connections between themes, motifs, modulations, timbre. A composition is, if properly regarded, a construction of pattern and proportion like an argument in mathematics. Like the mind that makes sense of mathematical progressions of argument through examining the invocations of principles and assumptions at each step, so do the ear and mind maneuver their way through a composition. The ear follows time, but it is also constantly twisting, moving backward as it moves forward. For the only way in which we come to know music is through comparison, through noting differences, similarities, and transformations.

The musical theme and variations may even be the archetypal musical form, because it displays the kinds of procedures at work throughout every musical composition. Whenever we are asked, in music, to feel some connection between one moment and the next, we are asked to attend to elements that remain the same and those that are changed. Variation is music's mode of argument. It establishes similarities and analogies, creating proportions. Proportions also give each composition its distinctive topology, its sense of space; they tell us where that space bends, how far it is from one point to another, whether or not that space is continuous or whether it is shattered into distinct and separable regions. Proportions establish meanings. Music is structurally ordered by analogy.

This may even be the kind of ordering that takes place in any act of understanding: we attempt to make analogies. We find in these analogies and internal mappings the fundamental proportions governing the form. This is how we memorize telephone numbers, looking for patterns even in randomness; it is how theories are constructed; it is even how we come to understand nature.

Ghyka calls this the "Principle of Analogy"; it is, he notes, "common to Art and Science":

> Analogia itself, the geometric proportion (A is to B as C is to D), was the capital tool of Euclidean Mathematics. And the master minds in our Western Civilization have been, since Plato, the ones who have perceived the analogies, the permanent similarities, between things, structures, images.

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Analogy, Ghyka explains, is at the base of eurhythmy and modulation, in music and in physics. It is also part of the art of literature, which depends for its power on metaphor, which is a "condensed and unexpected analogy." As Aristotle put it: "The greatest thing of all is to be a master of the metaphor. It is the only thing which cannot be taught by others; and it is also a sign of original genius, because a good metaphor implies the intuitive perception of similarity in dissimilar things."

This principle is also connected with our experience of beauty. Beauty makes it seem as if the object we are gazing at were perfectly adapted to our understanding, as if there were some unexpected harmony between the mind of the observer and the object being observed. Beauty seems to have its home out there, in the world; it has a public meaning. And it seems to make a claim of objectivity; it inspires one to think every viewer should consider the object beautiful as well. A beautiful object, whether in nature or in art, also seems to have a purposiveness—a sense that it was made specifically for our contemplation. Beauty calms the conflicts of the rational mind; it reveals, enlightens, affirms, charms, delights.

And the principle of analogy touches on the mechanism by which we come to know beauty and sense the aesthetic. What we sense at such moments is the analogy of part and whole, object and other object, relation and relation. This is one reason why in moments of aesthetic transport we assert the universality of the beautiful: we are feeling something not inchoate, but something precise and seemingly beyond contradiction. It is also why we feel something similar when coming upon the beautiful in art (or music) and the beautiful in nature (or mathematics). "Aesthetic pleasure is essentially one and the same," Schopenhauer wrote, "no matter whether it is evoked by a work of art or immediately produced by the contemplation of nature and life." Beauty is experienced as a form of knowledge because it is through the archetypal rational act—that of analogy and metaphor—that we come to know the beautiful.

What relationship does the sublime bear to this rational contemplation of analogy and proportion? Kant argues that while the beautiful is related to the form of an object, the sublime may even exist in a formless object. The beautiful object seems purposive and final; the sublime object seems to resist judgment. Beauty solicits understanding; the sublime defies it. It seems, Kant suggests, to have a capacity to "transcend all empirical standards merely by thinking of it." The sublime is linked to limitlessness and the infinite, yet it also has its effect because that limitlessness is somehow grasped and absorbed at once—

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as a single whole. We gaze at the landscape and take in its unity from our lofty perch, but what we take in seems beyond limit. And while beauty makes it seem as if an object were adapted to our rational mind, the sublime seems to subvert our judgment, perpetrating what Kant called an "outrage on the imagination." It makes the imagination seem inadequate to the task while giving our understanding an almost ecstatic sense of having apprehended that which should be beyond its containing powers. The effect of the sublime is not out there, in the world of objects, but in subjective experience. The sublime is part of inner, not outer life.

We can find something like this in mathematics as well. Kant identified a type of the sublime as the "mathematically sublime" because it established its sublimity on the basis of immensity. We can find literal examples of the mathematical sublime, as when the mathematician Georg Cantor defined the concept of the transfinite cardinals, orders of infinity governed by their own arithmetic. Think of it: there are infinities of different sizes; they can be added and multiplied, creating still other orders of infinity out of their combinations. When we contemplate such concepts, we seem to find a perfect example of what Kant described as the effect of the sublime. On the one hand the mind is humbled by finding its imagination unequal to its ideas—the mind cannot grasp what it can think; on the other hand it feels itself "elevated in its own estimate of itself" because of the power of such ideas.

If engaging in an act of aesthetic judgment, we would start to interpret, say, a landscape, to see the interrelationships, the ways in which human-made shapes interact with natural forms, the changing character of the rock face as the altitude changes, the paths running between the hilltops. We would be absorbed in detail, attempting to establish analogies and proportions, creating a structure for the vision as we do in creating a mathematical theory or comprehending a chess game. In this way, we would partially control and contain the landscape; we would see, perhaps, how a stream affects neighboring rock formations, or how sunlight affects tree growth. The scene would seem like a grand purposive construction arrayed before us for the sake of our reflective analysis, awaiting our interpretations, our theories.

But what happens if we begin that close reading, attentively mapping out relationships, and then find that, at the moment we began, the scene changed? Or that there is so much detail that internal relationships hide themselves and reappear, depending on where we look. What if we keep coming up with "theories," interpretations, orderings, assertions of purpose, that keep being undone by the sheer

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size and variability of our landscape? We can understand the principles governing the change and complexity but are awed by being unable to encompass them in our imagination. That is what can take place in much music, and not just if it is of Wagnerian dimensions. Schilling found the sublime in the fugues of Bach and Handel: "The ear cannot absorb in a single act of perception the full power of the harmony and the conjunction of the rhythms." The achievement of the sublime may be even the point of the fugue, which seeks to overwhelm the ear and mind with its interweaving voices.

Christian Friedrich Michaelis, a musician at work at the end of the eighteenth century, also spoke of the symphonies of Haydn and Mozart as massive creations "where the part writing is very complex. . . . The listener's imagination is severely taxed in an effort to grasp the whole." In a recent suggestive study of Mozart's *Jupiter* Symphony, Elaine Sisman argues that the fourth movement is really an interweaving of two finales into one, a fugal, learned finale, and a racy, comic, gallant sonata finale.

This mixing of genre leads the ear in different directions, so there is no easy way to settle into a well-ordered theory or stable interpretation. Mozart plays with proportion and expectation. After the beginning of the recapitulation, he even leads the ear through a series of dissonant restatements of the opening motive that rush by so quickly they seem to pull the ground away from the listener. It is not the hugeness here that stymies us; it is the quickness and the quantity of information. In the movement's coda, this is even more the case. In a passage barely lasting a few minutes, Sisman notes, there is a "double fugue on the first and second theme, a canon on every one of the important motives, [and] a triumphant reassertion of the four-note theme." The quantity of stimulation creates a "cognitive exhaustion" that she associates with the sublime. So in music the sublime can arise not from size but from structure. A piece might defy our imagination to give it coherence even as we seem to grasp it as a whole. Even the brief A Minor Prelude of Chopin, for example, can seem an "outrage," a subversion of reason, yet it is also curiously elevating because of the way it inspires a very high estimate of our own sensibility as we come to grasp it as if carried along by its currents (a crucial part of Chopin's appeal). We might even describe the Prelude as an attempt to create a psychological sublime, in which the music seems to limn a mysterious inner landscape.

The effect is similar to what we might find on gazing out at a sublime landscape from our sublime perch: an inability to grasp what we can understand. In detail it is all there; everything can be accounted for; we may even think that in its complexity it is well-or-

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dered. We have found the analogies. Yet what we understand we are still unable to imagine fully. But this is crucial: we experience the sublime partly because we do understand it. We know precisely what is happening in Mozart's finale and in a Bach fugue. We can identify all the analogies being made, all the proportions being established. We are not just mapping the music, we are giving that map depth and character. But it cannot all be absorbed simultaneously. The form becomes, again in Kant's phrase, an outrage on our imagination.

Kant insists on the difference between the sublime and the beautiful. But there are many points of connection. Over time, an aspect of the sublime can change: it seems as if, over time, the deeper our understanding is of an object, the more we are able to encompass it in our imagination. We can make more sense of its threat and outrage, even make those assaults on our imagination seem part of our expectations and understandings. If we gaze out at that landscape, separated from it by the threshold, we are always partly detached from it, always analyzing as we are overwhelmed, always attempting to interpret and discern or create its beauty. And it may be that what stymies us one day is grasped the next. This is not a Kantian view, but it seems as if our imagination can be educated by our understanding. The overwhelming scene, with its intricate networks of relations, its wide expanses and sharp contrasts, will be seen as an expression of order, a representation of something else, perhaps something still more sublime. What seems beyond our imagining is incorporated into it.

If I am studying a fugue at the piano, for example, over time, I gradually become more aware of intertwining voices, sorting them out, singing them to myself. I begin to grasp the sublime without losing sense of its sublimity. I learn to hear even if I am still overwhelmed by what I hear. I'm educated by the sublime. The sublime may be a little like the outrage of the Commendatore in *Don Giovanni,* bursting in on the seducer's dinner; it is something otherworldly, beyond expectation and comprehension. But part of the shock does change. We no longer think of Mozart as sublime in precisely the same way his contemporaries did, because we have become familiar with the effects. We have come to understand precisely what created them. We know the Commendatore; we welcome him. Mozart's successors had to raise the stakes.

This may be true of science as well. We tend today not to realize fully the sublimity latent in Maxwell's Equations, even if in the world of nineteenth-century science they seemed to point to an awesome, barely Newtonian universe. What once seemed inchoate, beyond order, was given order in these equations. They allowed scientists of the time to move beyond bafflement: to sense more clearly the world's

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order as well as its sublimity. In fact, earlier sublimities, with all their immensities, have now become well-ordered aspects of beautiful and accepted theories. What once seemed craggy, shadowed, beyond our grasp, is gradually revealed to be elegant, graceful, beautiful. It may even be that all truly great musical compositions also succeed in challenging us by letting us do the same: taste the untamable and possibly even come close to taming it. This evolution of the sublime is partly why the concept has enjoyed renewed life in discussions of the "technological sublime"—displays of human invention, construction and display—discussed in such recent books as David E. Nye's *American Technological Sublime.*

But there is yet another twist in our relationship with the sublime. As the sublime is absorbed into our imaginings and our understanding—as it becomes more beautiful—new crevices are discovered within it. With each added technological accomplishment, with each creation of a new order, with each noticed proportion in the old, with each expansion of our imagination, come other disorders and other disruptions. No sooner have we made sense of that landscape than we notice something more profoundly disordered about it, something so complex it seems to defy us. No sooner has our understanding grown, than our imagination is again thrown into disarray in trying to grasp what we have come to know. No sooner is one task done than we become aware, yet again, of the immensity of the world beyond the threshold. There always seems to be something lying outside the reach of the theory, outside the ability of our minds and ears to imagine or understand. Beauty seems to change under pressure from the sublime; first we expand beauty's territory and then we come to see how much more lies beyond it, beyond reach in the realm of the sublime. Much of science right now is, in fact, preoccupied with how order grows out of disorder and simplicity out of complexity. We have theories of evolutionary development in which design seems to evolve out of accident; of complex systems that seem subject to law but beyond prediction; of cosmologies in which all ordinary concepts of space and time dissolve; of neuroscience in which the mind evolves out of randomly firing pathways in the brain. Our science has become almost completely the science of the sublime.

But maybe that is always what science has been: our seeking to master the sublime—to find its beauty and inner laws—while also revealing its power, which may even be all the greater for being understood. This may be a goal of art as well: a quest for what seems beyond the abilities of art ever to grasp. We are continuously engaged in a task of training our imaginations to be equal to the achievements of our understanding.

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The sublime inspires an infinite desire, a yearning for completion that will always be beyond satisfaction; each advance feeds the hunger for greater completion and opens new regions that lie, like the figures on Keats's urn, just beyond reach. This spirit has driven Western art and science for centuries; it is what has given them a religious cast, promising a final fulfillment that can never be fully attained. The sublime has also given them a rationalist cast, for it is the sublime that spurs us to understanding, not the static contemplation of the beautiful, with its poised proportions.

This project is partially rejected by "post-modern" views of art and knowledge, which seem to eliminate the sublime by setting up multiple thresholds for viewing, putting the emphasis not on the landscape, but on the playfulness of the observer in refusing to get too involved in its decipherment. But the tradition of the sublime remains overpowering. For, as we stand on each threshold, gazing outward or inward, we cannot fail to be amazed by the achievements of reason and dumbstruck by its failings—thrilled by what we can imagine, overcome by what we cannot. We advance our understanding and increase the powers of our imagination, even as we ultimately fall short in both. The effort, though, remains, undiminished and tragically human: to transform the merely sublime into the truly beautiful.

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Swan Lake

ELISAVIETTA RITCHIE

Never have I flung
even a rag in anger
or smashed a glass to celebrate.

But again I've left my mother
sprawled on the couch,
gin not quite cached.

When like a bride
I begged my husband,
Help me help her somehow—

he shrugged,
finished the scotch,
went to bed.

This is not one of those
currently fashionable tales
of wife beating or child abuse:

We still love each other,
our children sleep upstairs,
adored, unbruised.

But tonight in the small house
painted hunter green,
ringed with hemlocks

in a cul-de-sac, I spin out
my precious set of 78s,
twirling my own choreographies

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around and around and around
as I did on childhood afternoons
in my parents' empty apartment,

two-faced Odile/Odette
awkward, out of step,
every dance in the dark,

alone with two brilliant alcoholics
and two children who might have
inherited our proclivities, genes.

I still adore Tchaikovsky
with what my husband calls
"that sloppy passion of adolescence,"

but I gain no wisdom watching
the needle circling in spirals,
following mysterious molded grooves

never quite coming back to themsleves.
When the last 78 spins to a stop,
one by one I let them fall.

Nothing dramatic.
Just quiet crashes
shattering utterly.

✪ ELISAVIETTA RITCHIE is the author of *Flying Time: Stories and Half-Stories.* Her recent poetry collections are *The Arc of the Storm* and *Elegy for the Other Woman.* She edited *The Dolphin's Arc: Endangered Creatures of the Sea.*

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Leaving Vilnius

LYN LIFSHIN

On the night we leave Vilnius,
I send my son, Beryl, to bring goats
next door in the moon. Since he is

not the youngest, he can't wait
pressed under a shawl of coarse cotton
close to my breast as I whisper,

"hurry" in Yiddish. My ankles swell
from ten babies. Though I am only
thirty my waist is thick, my lank hair

hangs in strings under the babushka
I swear I will burn in New York
City. Last night I dreamt others

pointed and snickered near the tenement,
that a neighbor borrowed the only bowl
I will bring that was my mother's

and breaks it. Tonight every move must be
secret. In rooms where there is no heat,
no one puts on muddy shoes or talks.

It is forbidden to leave, a law we
will break like the skin of ice on
pails of milk. Years from now, a

granddaughter will write that Beryl
didn't have a word for *America* yet,
this night of a new moon. I press

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the baby to my skin, warn everyone
even the youngest must not make a sound.
Frozen branches creak. We shiver at men with

guns near straw roofs on fire. It
took our old samovar, every coin
to bribe someone to take us to

the train. "Pretend to be sleeping," I
whisper as the conductor moves near.
I stuff cotton in the baby's mouth

and hold the mortar and pestle wrapped
in the quilt of feathers closer,
tell Beryl he will sleep in this soft blue

in the years ahead. But now he's knocked side-
ways into the ribs of the boat, so seasick
he can't swallow the orange someone throws

from an upstairs bunk though it is bright as
sun and smells of a new country we can
only imagine. I never dream I could

become a stranger to myself there, forget
why we risked dogs and guns to come

✪ LYN LIFSHIN is the author of *Cold Comfort* and *Blue Tattoo: Poems of the Holocaust.* Her poems have appeared in many poetry and literary magazines.

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Father's Tales

JOHN FORESTER

MY FATHER, author of *Captain Horatio Hornblower* and other novels, was a storyteller, and I started reading his books when I was seven. He spent part of most mornings at the desk in his study, a ground-floor room that looked onto the front garden of our house in suburban London, and when he was in there all the household had to be quiet. No vacuuming, no loud shouting, not while Father was working. However, one morning I found him writing in three books spread out on the dining room table, each one held open by other books resting on the margins of the pages. He was marking the books with his pen, a desecration I had never seen him commit before. In our house, you never made marks in books; they were too precious, and many belonged to the library. As he turned the pages of the books, they turned their pages back themselves.

"What are you doing, Father? Can I hold these?"

"I'm correcting them. I have to mark them exactly alike. Here, hold this one while I correct that one."

"What made them wrong?"

"These are the books you see me write at my desk. The printer has made these proofs and sent them back to me so I can see if he has done it correctly. I have to mark the mistakes and send him a copy back so he can correct the type."

I looked at the word he was correcting. He underlined the word *Lydia.*

"Do you want a line under it?"

"No. That tells the printer to use italics, letters slanted like these." He pointed out *Natividad* on the same page.

"That's funny writing. Why is it like that?"

"These are the names of ships, and they are always written in either italics or capital letters. I like italics better."

✪ JOHN FORESTER is the author of *Statistical Selection of Business Strategies, Effective Cycling,* and *Bicycle Transportation.* This memoir is drawn from his unpublished biography of his father, *The Novelist and the Storyteller.*

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"Is this a book about ships?"

"Yes, it is. Here, don't lose that page until I have finished." There were not many mistakes. When he had finished, I asked if I could read one.

"Not one of these. These are too precious now. But I have one more copy you may read." He picked up the three copies and took them to his study. From his desk he handed me a fourth just like them. "Now run along. I have other work to do."

That morning I opened the first pages, reading about a sea captain taking his bath, looking at his tummy in the mirror because he was starting to get fat, tapping the weevils out of his breakfast hardtack, and impatiently trying to finish his breakfast slowly because the lookout has hailed "Land Ho!" and he doesn't want his men to see him in a hurry. Now I realize that I was probably the first of millions of Hornblower fans, but that morning there was nothing unusual about my father writing stories for other men to print so many other people could read them. The book took me a week or so to read, and I was left wondering a little why Captain Hornblower was so angry at his happy return.

Some time later I saw my father getting ready to work at his desk and I asked him if he was writing another story about Captain Hornblower. "Yes, I am," he replied.

"Please hurry up and finish it. I liked the first one so much."

I noticed that one of our bookshelves had a row of books with my father's name, C. S. Forester, on the back, and I took to reading about Rifleman Dodd, General Curzon, the Gun, Mr. Marble, and Rose and Allnutt. I even risked boredom by starting Mr. Brown's essay about resolute behavior, to discover how Leading Seaman Brown's devotion to duty ensured the sinking of a German cruiser in the Great War.

I knew that Cecil Forester was not my father's birth name; he had been born a Smith, the name of his father. When he started writing he thought that Smith "would not attract notice on the spine of a book," and ended up by using Forester for both professional and social affairs.

My father knew all about ships and the sea and boats and boat handling. Before I was born, my mother and father had toured France and Germany in an outboard motor boat, and now they owned foltbootes, or folding canoes (kayaks to Americans) in which they paddled English, French, and Austrian rivers. In the autumn of 1938, Hitler proposed to carve up Czechoslovakia and my father was sent to Prague, officially as a correspondent and unofficially to tell the Czechs that Britain would stand by them. Britain did not, and my father,

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ashamed, slunk out of Prague "like a beaten dog with his tail between his legs." In recompense to me, whose holiday plans had also been disrupted, he took me for a weekend in a camping punt on the Thames, just before my ninth birthday. This trip is my deepest memory of him.

We hired a camping punt and paddled it upriver from Teddington lock through sights new to me. The water probably was shallow enough for poling, but I was far too small to use a punt pole. The upper river has that singular English charm, both rural and civilized at once. Cows graze in carefully tended fields right down to the water's edge, for the water level varies only by inches throughout the year. The string of bungalows near the lock slowly crept behind as we paddled gently upriver through the sunshine. Father showed me how to grasp the paddle.

"Look, John, pull steadily without a jerk, and at the end of the stroke turn the blade like so, so it acts as a steering oar for a second. That way you counteract the turning effect of paddling on one side. Do it just often enough to keep the bow lined up with that tall tree at the next bend. That's our steering point for this reach."

"What's a reach, Father?"

"Each section of the river between bends is a reach. It's as long as you can hold a straight course. When we enter the bend by that tree we'll leave this reach."

"Look, Father, see the string of whirlpools my paddle leaves in the water."

"Yes, those are the only marks you should leave. They show that you have pushed against the water with each stroke. Every other ripple or swirl is a mark of wasted effort. See how smoothly my paddle goes through the water on the return stroke. Not a sound, not a ripple, and no drag at all. Can you do as well?"

Quietly the banks slid by. We heard music behind, and were overtaken by a steamer full of passengers gazing at us.

"See that flag, John? That's her house flag. It tells you she's owned by Salters. She's going up to Oxford, to come back tomorrow."

Motorboats passed by both upriver and down.

"You don't have to worry about them. You're under oars, they're under power and have to stay clear. Just don't do anything unexpected at the last minute. The rule is: 'Hold your course and speed.'"

One cruiser passed too close and too fast, her wash beating against the flat sides of the punt and a cupful of water came aboard.

"Pull up the cushions, John. Use the cloth to mop up before it spreads. She was going much too fast. It's no danger to us, just a nuisance if they catch you while cooking dinner, but it washes down

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the banks all along the river. The Thames Conservancy Board will be after him about it."

In the late afternoon, we moored to a pair of willows along the bank, and let down the canvas camping cover on the shore side. While mooring the punt, Father showed me how to make a clove hitch with the mooring line around the branch of a willow tree. At some other time he had shown me how to make a reef (square) knot. These two were the only knots that he ever knew; they were the extent of his knowledge of marlinspike seamanship.

Father showed me how to start the Primus stove and prepare dinner. I did not at the time realize that warming an opened tin of beans in a saucepan of boiling water was hardly the way to make a hearty meal for active sailors, but it was as much as Cecil was capable of.

We ate slowly, watching the sun come down among the trees of the opposite bank. A pair of glittering flashes appeared upriver from us. I pointed.

"That's a rowing boat coming down. The sun is flashing on his varnished oarblades as he feathers them. He's coming down fast, too. Probably trying to be home before dark."

I could see the rower long before I could see his boat. As he rowed closer, I could see a powerful young man balanced on a long narrow hull barely above the water, his oars pivoted on frames extending from each side of the hull. As he passed us, he turned his head to catch a quick glimpse of the river ahead, and I saw his open mouth, heaving chest, and the glitter of sweat on his forehead.

"Watch his blades in the water. See that they hardly pull through the water at all, while his pull on the sculls pushes the rowlocks forward, and with them the shell."

"Is he racing?"

"No, not here, now. He may be practicing for the Diamond Sculls, the most famous race in the world for single sculls. Some want to win that more than anything else in the world. There was an American, of Irish family, who was a noted oarsman. He wanted to race, but his entry wasn't accepted because he'd been a bricklayer in his youth. You can't race if you've been a manual laborer. It gives you an unfair advantage. So he raised his son to win the Diamond Sculls just because he couldn't do it himself." (Cecil knew the story of John B. Kelly of Philadelphia, who brought up his son, John B. Kelly, Jr., to compete in the races from which he had been excluded, and who was the father of Grace Kelly.)

The oarsman round the bend, the sun below the trees, we unrolled our sleeping bags on the cushions that covered the bottom of the

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punt, pulled down the remaining sections of the cover, and went to sleep. The return trip the next day was a harder pull against the wind with a few showers of rain. Father took up the quant and poled us along for a little, but most of the water was too deep. We returned the punt at dusk and hungrily set off homeward.

Just as in that weekend on the Thames, Father knew everything and was always willing to share his knowledge. Some of his more discerning acquaintances scathingly described this as "Cecil's Infallibility."

I had spent the Augusts of 1938 and 1939 in Berlin. The first summer was in the house of my father's German publisher on the Kleine Wannsee, where I was derided by the other children as a foolish Englishman who did not worship Hitler. The second was with a friend of my mother's, a teacher in Zehlendorf. My father arrived unexpectedly.

"The international situation is very tense," he announced. "Pack your clothes."

I packed, forgetting my blazer, and Father and I sped to the train station. It was a hot August night as the train crept across Germany toward Holland. My father did not permit me to leave the coach to find the station bathroom, which I increasingly needed, until we crossed the frontier into safety.

The next week, war came. In a month, my father was sent to America, to write things that would help keep American public opinion favorable to Britain, and in five months my mother, my brother George, and I, with our Danish au pair girl, Ruth, were able to follow. My father's work was partly in New York with British Information Services and partly in Hollywood, but he told my mother to "go to San Francisco and rent a house; it's the nicest city on the West Coast." We ended up high in the Berkeley hills across the Bay from San Francisco, and Berkeley remained my father's official residence for the rest of his life. Particularly before America entered the war, he came and went as his duties required.

In the summer of 1941, my father produced an amateur story simultaneous with writing his professional ones. *Poo-Poo and the Dragons* was designed to encourage George to eat better. George had a low-grade unsuspected allergy to eggs, which made him puny, irritable, obscurely ill, and uninterested in food. Father then decided to tell a story at lunchtime as long as George ate. When George stopped eating, the story stopped. This story grew famous in the neighborhood, and soon not only George and I but Tom Lewis and John and Bill Underhill were regular visitors for lunch, all of us encouraging George to eat so we could hear more of the story. Like any successful serial writer, Father managed to foreshadow a crucial event just at the

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critical time, which was not at the end of the day's installment but just as George would be wondering whether or not to ask for a second helping.

Father's day, as had been his usual plan for years, began with breakfast in bed at eight exactly, continued with the newspaper, letters if the postman had arrived, and thoughts about his professional story. At nine-thirty he rose, shaved, and dressed, with the day's writing in his head, and from ten to twelve he wrote out that story. At ten past twelve, when we returned from school, Father came straight down to the dining room prepared to eat lunch while continuing his amateur story of Poo-Poo without any apparent effort or pause.

He played for time every once in a while, giving his characters outrageous names and using them to test our attention while he thought out the next incident. Poo-Poo had a real name, Harold Heavyside Brown, which we all had to remember and repeat when asked, but everybody called him Poo-Poo. One day he went walking and found a lost dragon, named Horatio, who later acquired a mate, Ermentrude, and child, Marmaduke. "You know that eggs have to be kept warm to hatch, don't you? Well, dragon's eggs have to be kept red hot by the father dragon breathing fire upon them. It was rather like having a blast furnace in the back garden, and when the baby dragon hatched out, Horatio roared in joy, making a noise like all the lawnmowers on earth, never oiled, being run at once. That noise brought the policeman.

"As Mr. Brown said this, the policeman scratched his head and said . . . And what was the policeman's name?"

"The policeman's name was Patrick MacGillicuddy," we chorused.

"He said, 'I know there's no regulation that specifically prohibits keeping dragons, but I do have one here (he opened his notebook that contained all the laws and regulations) that prohibits keeping dangerous animals.'

"'Would you call that a dangerous animal?' asked Mr. Brown, pointing to Ermentrude, who was proudly rocking Marmaduke's perambulator back and forth and singing to herself, blowing little puffs of steam and smoke with every note.

"'Well . . . er,' said Officer MacGillicuddy.

"'Well, er, indeed,' said Mr. Brown . . . And what do you remember about Mr. Brown?"

"Mr. Brown was a very clever man!" was our immediate reply.

The fact that we knew very well that "the very clever man" was C. S. Forester we could never hold against him. He was charming about it, and, confound it all, he was indeed a very clever man.

After finishing the Poo-Poo stories, Father took to running a quiz

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contest at mealtimes, giving peanuts or raisins as prizes for every correct answer.

"You know that many flexible fabrics are woven of fibers. In thirty seconds I want you, John, to give me . . ." here he looked at his watch, then rushed out the rest of the question: "one from each of the major kingdoms, or classes of material, the sources and uses of four different fibers used in fabrics."

He demanded full and complete answers. For this question he would reward a peanut only for the complete answer: "Wool, from sheep, an animal product used for sweaters. Cotton, from cotton plants, vegetable, used for sheets. Nylon, man-made from oil, used for stockings. And . . . and. . . ." Here time began to run out swiftly. "And asbestos, a mineral that's mined, for rescue suits and insulation."

At the time I thought he knew everything of importance. He told me then his fictional tale that, when he was very small, he would collect all the library cards his brothers and sisters had, to obtain the maximum number of books at one time, and repeat that performance every week. I remember seeing him average between one and two books a day, plus an hour or so of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* as a soporific at bedtime. He claimed to be the only man in the world who had read the *Britannica* through more than once; he said he'd read it through three times. Much of what he read he retained for years in an unsystematic fashion, recalling abstruse facts at will, whatever the subject of discussion, except when it was music or philosophy. Music he never talked about except to say that he never read anything about it, but about philosophy he quoted the old chestnut: "Philosophy is a blind man in a darkened room seeking a black cat that isn't there." He didn't say so, but he also did not understand the mathematics that was in the scientific articles. However, his ability to recall odd facts, or what he stated as facts, about the most abstruse of subjects led his listeners to believe that he was a well-educated man.

About this time Father first told me of his opinions concerning Hollywood society's extravagancies and materialistic way of life. He told me that there they spend everything they earn, that when a man earning a thousand a week suddenly finds his option isn't taken up, he's seen next Friday trying to sell his wife's fur coat. He called it conspicuous consumption, spending just to show you have it to spend. Those words introduced me to the concept of conspicuous consumption in funeral customs, and the money spent on coffins and flowers.

"It's ridiculous. More than that, it's almost extortion and I expect it's very profitable. The English workingman used to be extremely proud of his ability to pay his way and avoid the poorhouse, and he'd stint and save even in his old age to leave enough money for a brass-

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mounted coffin [one with fancy polished handles]. That's where the slang phrase 'with knobs on' came from. I don't really hold with inheritance, but believe that a man should be buried with his last dollar. To stint and save in life for a fancy funeral, however, is nothing but perverted vanity."

In the house library was a copy of Thorstein Veblen's devastatingly critical *Theory of the Leisure Class,* which had introduced the phrase 'conspicuous consumption' to sociology. Father recommended Veblen's book as an interesting exposition and support of the ideas he had just expressed to me. As an eleven-year-old's introduction to economics and sociology, that's quite an experience. I was already a foreign observer of American customs, and after the experience of reading that book, I never became quite acclimatized.

The line of conversation about funeral customs naturally led to a consideration of death. "Death comes to us all, not very considerately, perhaps, but inevitably. Remember, John, that I have been a medical student; I have seen men die. For many it comes as a release; for others, it steals upon them unawares. In either case, it is not an event one should place great importance on. Remember . . . [was I likely to forget after the third retelling?] that when Charles II lay dying, he still maintained his charm and consideration. His courtiers waited about his deathbed, as they must to be able to report honestly the circumstances and time of their King's death. Knowing that they had been in attendance a long time, Charles remarked to them, 'I'm sorry, gentlemen, to be such a plaguey long time dying.'"

Father also told me Suetonius's story of the Roman emperor Vespasian, who, as he lay dying, referring to the custom of deifying past emperors, remarked to his courtiers, "Gentlemen, I fancy I am becoming a god."

Through this period I became aware that my father was a famous man. He was obviously very well regarded by the British government. High-ranking military and, particularly, naval officers visited our house for both social and professional reasons. His works appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post,* the prime mass-market magazine in America, like network television today. Some were accounts of recent naval or military actions, some were fictions derived from such, while others were historical fictions, but all had relevance to the urgent task of keeping American public opinion favorable to Britain by telling the truth about the war. People whom I had barely met expressed admiration for his books and stories and asked me about him, to which I returned pleasant acknowledgments with admirable modesty. He knew secrets and participated in keeping them secret, as he told me after the war. One was the existence of the first radar set small enough

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to be carried by a night fighter plane; another was about the proximity fuse for anti-aircraft shells. Once, when I was burning the garden leaves in the incinerator, my father pulled a sheaf of correspondence out of his pocket, deposited it in the incinerator, and made sure it was burned.

"I am often sent secret material that I have to be sure cannot get into the wrong hands," he said in explanation.

He became partially crippled in 1943, his walking limited to two city blocks and one staircase a day. In 1945 my parents divorced; George and I stayed with Father. He was the embodiment of the enlightenment, standing for truth, reason, and competence in every aspect of life. He could justify the reasons for his every action, and he expected the same from us. Only once did he hit me. The question was the proper time for returning from school dances. He thought they stopped an hour earlier than they did and insisted on an early return, despite my protest.

"Do you question my authority?"

"Of course I don't, but I don't have to believe that you are correct." Slam, right across the cheek. At another time, he thought that I was lying, although I wasn't, and he browbeat me into tears over that. I didn't fuss about these actions; justice sometimes makes mistakes, and he seemed the embodiment of justice and reason.

While he was praised as an author, he didn't agree with schoolteachers. When I brought school essays home to ask why my teacher had blue-penciled so much, he thought the teacher was mistaken. Who was I to believe—a world-famous author or someone who couldn't get ten column inches in the local Gas Jet?

As soon after the war as new arrangements could be made, Father sent me for my final year of high school to a well-known eastern preparatory school, to get me ready for Harvard. "St. George's is run on the English model and you are behind. You will be there for at least two years, and if you don't work hard it will be three." I accepted that if St. George's was run on the English model I would be behind, because I had been more than two years ahead of California schools when I arrived at the age of ten. Both my brother and I went to St. George's. I discovered how hard it was to be cooped up without girls, and when I discovered that I would graduate in a year because I was not behind, I hated the place. Besides, I wanted to be a physicist and I lived in Berkeley, adjacent to a world-famous department of physics. Back in Berkeley in June, I walked down to the University of California's admissions office, was admitted, and wrote to Harvard saying that I preferred U.C. Berkeley. The next day I told my father as he was having his breakfast in bed while the morning serenade of U.C.'s

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campanile bells drifted in the window. I expected an explosion, but the act was done. His face and voice expressed his anger.

"I suppose that it never occurred to you that this means that George cannot continue at St. George's?" My puzzlement showed. "You can hardly expect me to have one son on one coast and the other on the other coast on different vacation schedules!" Even I knew that Harvard and St. George's didn't have the same vacation schedules. That remained a puzzler for many years.

At St. George's I had been taught college-level English by Norris Hoyt, the finest teacher I have known, who criticized my writing to perfection and encouraged the study of literature as the broadest description of living through the ages. At Berkeley, I kept both physics and English going for two years, but after a deep disappointment in love and much soul searching, I graduated in English.

During those years, I had to re-evaluate my father's work, lest I be misled by personal prejudice. The professors largely sneered at his books, but I concluded that while he was not a great novelist he was an excellent craftsman who inserted into his stories every item that was necessary for the plot without alerting the reader to what had been done. While there is constant suspense, the resolution of his plots then seems inevitable; he was a first-rate storyteller. In comparison, other novelists far better received by academics seemed poor craftsmen and, in many cases, purveyors of intellectual fantasies under the claim of truth. I enjoyed both realism and fantasy when conveyed by excellent craftsmanship; I disliked intellectual fantasies parading as truth, and even more when conveyed by poor writing. Because my attitude disagreed with the New Criticism then, and even more with what has come of it now, I concluded that I was not cut out to be a professor of English.

My father recognized his own standing, as he wrote to his mistress and literary advisor, Frances Phillips, after reading half a dozen novels by Orwell.

"I've been quite drunk over them. And smug. I've been able to tell myself that I can write novels better than Orwell could—N.B. that doesn't mean the same as saying that I can write better novels. Some of his technique isn't so good, especially when he's handling plants for conversation. He has the clarity of mind, and so on, but he hasn't the low cunning."

I felt then that my relationship with him had matured, that I understood his character, his profession, his way of life, and that few further changes would occur in our relationship. So far as my side of the relationship was concerned, that is what happened.

In 1964, when he was sixty-four and I was thirty-four, my father

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suffered an incapacitating stroke. The man who lived by words, spoken and written, could no longer find the words to express his thoughts. In 1966, he died. Very quickly, new facts changed my picture of him. His second wife passed his clothes on to me. In the pocket of a tweed jacket, just like the one from which I had seen him pull letters to burn in the incinerator, I found two love letters from different women in England, responding enthusiastically to his requests to visit with each of them during the annual trip to England that he had planned before his stroke. Both letters were addressed to the Hawaiian hotel where he and his wife had been vacationing. His will disclosed far more financial assets, of far different types, than he had, of his own choice, taken his time to carefully inform me of in years past. The very same terms that awarded a pittance to my brother and to me awarded an equal amount to a lady and her son, the lady probably one of those whose letters I possessed. There was a string of bequests, each nominal considering the size of the estate, some to English people, more women than men, of whom I had little knowledge, but others to several couples who had been my college friends. In the only case into which I felt able to inquire, my father and his second wife had invited that couple on a Hawaiian vacation on the excuse that I and my wife could not come, and my father's relations with the wife had been one of the causes of the divorce in that family. Some months later, an English friend sent me a newspaper review of my father's recently published autobiography, *Long Before Forty,* the first I had ever heard of that.

My parents had met when my mother was nine and my father was twelve, and she had kept all of his letters despite his instruction to burn them soon after receipt. My father's eldest brother had written an unpublished family history "because my brother Cecil is a far better novelist than historian." Years later, another series of my father's letters surfaced, these to another mistress and also literary advisor, Frances Phillips, the editor of William Morrow & Co. I became involved in an investigation that I pursued intermittently for thirty years.

Comparison of my father's contemporaneous letters with his brother's history showed that *Long Before Forty* was an elaborate disguise, written when he was thirty for publication after his death. The same sources showed that the stories that he had told me about himself and his family had a large admixture of lies. He despised his parents and feared that his children would be as bad as he thought his parents had been. As he expressed it in a letter to Frances:

"It's a good thing I didn't have three sons—I suppose the third one would be a chronic invalid or something; that's one thing we can say about the first two and that is that even though they have neither

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brains nor morals they enjoy good health and I hope they fry in hell. Not that I wish them any harm. I think it would have been better both for them and for everybody else if when they were small they had had their faces immersed in a few inches of water for just a few minutes."

One series of letters told of the events that had destroyed his social reputation in Berkeley, entirely unknown to me at the time. His reputation explained the antagonism of the parents of the Berkeley girl whom I had expected to marry when I graduated from U.C., the antagonism that had forced us apart.

Two of his letters explained his peculiar reaction when I had informed him that I would be attending U.C. Berkeley instead of Harvard. His letters said that, although he had custody of George and me and owned a house for us to live in, he didn't like that. Once George and I had become settled after our first year in boarding school, he planned to sell the house and spend his time traveling, writing, and visiting his lady friends. By enrolling at Berkeley and declining Harvard I knew that I had prevented any acceptance by Harvard, but of course I had had no idea that I had thereby upset his planned new life. He could not be seen to abandon me when we lived within walking distance of the U.C. campus, and therefore there was no point, as far as he was concerned, in having George continue at St. George's.

He despised me until, fortuitously, at the age of thirty-three I became an assistant professor in the California State University system while still working at my normal job. That was recognition that he could not deny, particularly since, in his penniless youth, he had tried for a similar position with no success.

Quite clearly, both my father's social and professional lives had been made by storytelling. Professionally that had brought fame and fortune. Socially, that storytelling had been carefully crafted to serve his own ends, regardless of the effect on others. His autobiography was his record of the falsehoods that he had already told to conceal his past.

What causes a person to descend to such depths? My father was raised under circumstances that could lead a sensitive child to believe that he was the result of an adulterous relationship. I hypothesized that that is what he sometimes feared—the shame that such a discovery would bring. But, I hypothesized, he may sometimes have hoped for this, because that belief allowed him to fantasize about how much better his real father, and hence he himself, was than the man who was his mother's husband. That hypothesis explained much of my father's character and life, but there was no hard evidence that his biological father was indeed a prominent Egyptian instead of an English schoolteacher.

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In November 1995, I met again, for the first time in years, the daughter of one of my college friends. When I mentioned the hypothesis to her, she replied, "Of course," and described a scene when she had been thirteen. Cecil used to tell her stories that he obviously did not want others to hear, because he stopped whenever anyone else came within hearing. At one point he told her that he had Egyptian blood. He pointed to his easily tanned skin, his brown eyes, neither characteristic of his ostensible family, and, turning to show his profile, he pointed to his distinctively beaky nose, saying, "Isn't that the profile you see on statues of the pharaohs?"

Autumn Crossing

ROBERT L. BRIMM

A sea of color
rages ahead,
parting for us
with the soft
hum of miles
falling away,
gently washing
back into place,
cloaking all
traces of our
safe crossing.

✪ ROBERT L. BRIMM, a retired copy editor, has had poems in the *Christian Science Monitor, Capper's,* and other journals.

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The Belled Buzzard of Roxbury Mills

DANIEL MARK EPSTEIN

Record heat. A poisonous haze on the hills
Shows dawn as worn and blighted as twilight.
Police reporters dazed from pounding the street
Tally the dead from gunfire, dead from the heat,
Black on black crime, white on black on white.

I think I hear the buzzard of Roxbury Mills,
A childhood memory come alive once more
Out of some storybook or almanac,
Winged hellion with a bell around its neck
Whose clamor portends pestilence or war.

I think I hear the buzzard of Roxbury Mills
Who sits for hours on a limb or crag,
High and lonely, feared by the mortal flock
For the jangling some prankster made his burden.
Just after the Civil War, mad infantrymen

Spied his bloody beak. Having feasted then
On human flesh, the most expensive meat,
He would not dine on lesser carrion,
Neither horse nor cow, house cat or rabbit.
He gazes over housing tracts, and dreams

Of a time when the countryside will echo again
With rifle volleys and the peal of cannon.
He will not eat what other vultures eat,
But has survived for more than a century
On memory and hope. He loves this heat.

✪ DANIEL MARK EPSTEIN's most recent book of poetry is *The Boy in the Well.* His books of prose include *Star of Wonder* and *Sister Aimee.*

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Philosophy into Fiction

THEODORE ZIOLKOWSKI

ONE OF THE MOST REMARKABLE international publishing phenomena of the 1990s has been the spectacular success of *Sophie's World* (1991) by Jostein Gaarder, who teaches philosophy at an adult education center in Norway. This "novel about the history of philosophy," which has been pronounced "idiotic" by the prominent German philosopher Walter Schulz and "boring" by at least one of my philosophical colleagues at Princeton, has been translated into twenty-two languages, is available on cassette, and will soon be produced as a musical. In Germany, where more than 1,700,000 copies have been sold, it has been among the top four titles on the best-seller list of *Der Spiegel* for more than three years and, in France, on the *palmarès* of *L'Express* since the spring of 1995. How to account for this response?

The plot, which resembles nothing so much as a Romantic tale by Hoffmann as told by Pirandello or Unamuno, concerns a girl named Sophie Amundsen, who lives with her mother in an unnamed Norwegian town while her father, captain of an oil tanker, is away from home for most of each year. Shortly before her fifteenth birthday, Sophie receives two unsigned letters containing nothing but the messages: *"Who are you?"* and *"Where does the world come from?"* On the same day she also receives a mysterious postcard: bearing a Norwegian stamp and postmarked "UN Batallion," it conveys birthday greetings in care of Sophie to a girl named Hilde Møller Knag. The following day Sophie gets more mail: a large brown envelope containing a three-page typewritten essay entitled "What Is Philosophy?" The same pattern continues for the next few weeks: a letter arrives raising provocative questions of a philosophical nature, which are then answered by the essays in the envelopes, sometimes delivered by a large Labrador dog. It soon emerges that Sophie's mysterious correspondent is a man named Alberto Knox, who wants to engage her interest in philosophy. However, Sophie remains mystified about the identity of Hilde, who

✪ THEODORE ZIOLKOWSKI, Professor of Comparative Literature at Princeton University, is the author of several books, including most recently *Virgil and the Moderns*, *The Mirror of Justice*, and, forthcoming, *The View from the Tower*.

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continues to receive cards in care of Sophie from her father, who is a major in the Norwegian army and a United Nations observer in Lebanon.

Then suddenly, more than halfway through the book and with no explanatory transition, the camera shifts, and we find ourselves in Lillesand, on the southern coast of Norway, where Hilde Møller Knag is waking up on the morning of her fifteenth birthday. Unwrapping the present that has just arrived from her father in Lebanon, she finds a large ring binder containing a typewritten manuscript, which begins with the words that opened the novel: "Sophie Amundsen was on her way home from school." The manuscript contains the very story that we have been reading: Sophie, her mother, her friends, and Alberto Knox, it turns out, are fictive figures invented by Major Knag for the amusement and edification of his daughter.

From this point on, the two stories continue in alternating sections as Hilde goes about her own business with her mother in Lillesand and reads further in the manuscript about Sophie. But now that the fictionality of Sophie's world has been established, that world is invaded from time to time by other figures from the realm of literature: Little Red Riding Hood passes through, along with Winnie-the-Pooh, Aladdin, Alice from Wonderland, the biblical Noah, and various figures from Disneyland and the Grimms' tales. The large Labrador, Hermes, also speaks occasionally. Their purely literary status is confirmed when, toward the end, Sophie and Alberto walk into a bookstore where copies of a novel entitled *Sophie's World* are on display.

Because Sophie and Alberto, as they become aware of their fictionality, resent the control exerted over their lives by Hilde's father, they plot to liberate themselves from the novel into which Albert Knag has placed them. At the garden party that Sophie gives on Midsummer Night to celebrate her fifteenth birthday, while commotions distract the author's attention, she and Alberto slip away and escape out of Knag's narrative into that timeless domain where fictional characters lead their eternal lives. From this new perspective, at the end of the novel, Sophie witnesses the homecoming of Hilde's father and their reunion in Lillesand. But the two parallel levels are unable to communicate: Hilde experiences Sophie's attempts to talk to her as no more than a vague breeze on her cheek.

Structurally the novel holds a certain interest as a post-modern variation on typical Romantic and modernist themes. The interpenetration of two levels of fictional reality is familiar, for instance, from such works as E. T. A. Hoffmann's "New Year's Eve Adventure," in which the narrator encounters Peter Schlemihl, a character from the story by Adelbert von Chamisso, or in his "Account of the Most Recent

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Fortunes of the Dog Berganza," where the narrator has a conversation with one of the dogs from Cervantes's "Dogs' Colloquy." Cervantes in the second part of *Don Quixote* and Novalis in the archetypal Romantic novel *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* featured heroes who read about their lives in copies of the works in which they exist. And the attempts of fictive figures to avoid the destiny to which they have been condemned by their authors contribute to the irony of such novels as Unamuno's *Mist* or Kurt Vonnegut's *Breakfast of Champions.*

Yet, it is not merely, or even primarily, its plot that has made *Sophie's World* so popular: even as complicated by the various ingenious Romantic devices, the plot is basically little more than a framework from which the author suspends his account of the history of Western philosophy from the pre-Socratics down to Nietzsche, Sartre, and the big bang theory. It is no surprise, but also no criticism of the work, that my colleague from the philosophy department found it boring: Gaarder is not writing for professional philosophers. His intended audience is young adults of Sophie's generation (for instance, my high-school-age granddaughter, who devoured the novel at the swimming pool this summer) or slightly older (the students in Gaarder's adult education courses). Sophie is challenged by the first two missives to think about the nature of consciousness ("Who are you?") and cosmology ("Where does the world come from?"). And even if she does not grasp all the subtleties of Aristotle's categories, she is moved by his passion for order to tidy up the chaos of her room and to apply logic to the analysis of everyday problems.

The history of philosophy is presented in a manner calculated to command the attention of young adults. Alberto uses a formal written text, in which the prose is relaxed and imaginative, only at the beginning. Soon he sends Sophie a videotape showing him on a tour of ancient Athens and depicting Plato and Aristotle in conversation. After they have met, he gives her informal lectures, often dressed suitably for the occasion: to discuss the medieval scholastics, he dons a monk's cloak and meets Sophie in an old stone church from the Middle Ages; to introduce her to the Renaissance thinkers, he wears hose, knee breeches, and a jacket with padded shoulders and invites her to his attic apartment, which is filled with furniture from the fifteenth century and decorated with antique bric-a-brac; they go to the Café Pierre, where Alberto sports a black beret, to consider the existentialists. The theories of Marx are brought to life for Sophie by her encounters with Dickens's Ebenezer Scrooge and the Little Match Girl from Hans Christian Andersen's tale. Alberto uses a computer program to illustrate Descartes's views on the relationship between mind and matter. But mostly he talks, using examples drawn from

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everyday life and constantly encouraging Sophie to respond critically or "dialectically" or, in the Hegelian term that she learns, "negatively."

The novel itself, with its interplay of parallel levels of reality and its figures on loan from other literary works, exemplifies questions on the ontology of fictional existence that have fascinated such contemporary thinkers as Willard V. Quine and John R. Searle. It is no accident, finally, that the mirror-image heroines are named Sophie and Hilde—after the legend that Sophia, as God's maternal aspect, revealed herself in a vision to the medieval thinker Hildegard of Bingen. By analogy, Sophie's story functions as Hilde's introduction to philosophy.

We can approach the question of its popularity most productively if we regard Gaarder's novel not as an exception—it is exceptional solely by virtue of its huge commercial success—but as representative of a trend. The past few years have brought forth in Europe and the United States a stream of works intended to popularize philosophy and make it accessible to the non-professional reader. Totem Books has published a series of "introductions" to various movements and thinkers: for instance, *Introducing Hegel* (1996), by Lloyd Spencer and Andrzej Krauze, in which the life, works, and influence of the Romantic philosopher are presented in witty caricatures and burlesques elucidated by capsule statements. Richard Osborne's *Philosophy for Beginners* (1992) offers an introduction in comic-book form to the main issues and figures of philosophy from the pre-Socratics to the post-structuralists (representing, for instance, Nietzsche dressed in a Superman costume or Hegel presiding over a shotgun wedding of Marx and Freud). John Tyerman Williams, an Oxford-trained philosopher, has given us *Pooh and the Philosophers* (1995), which sets out to "demonstrate beyond all reasonable doubt that the whole of Western philosphy—including, of course, Plato himself—is best considered as a long preparation for Winnie-the-Pooh." Lutz Geldsetzer, a professor of philosophy at the University of Düsseldorf, has topped this with his own tour de force: a three-hundred-page work entitled *Die Philosophenwelt / In Versen vorgestellt* (1995), in which the history of Western philosophy from its origins down to Heidegger is wittily narrated in rhymed couplets, beginning:

> Bekanntlich war's in Griechenland,
> wo man Philosophie erfand,
> zumindest die uns wohlbekannte,
> die herrschend blieb im Abendlande.
> (Everybody knows it was in Greece
> that philosophy was invented—
> at least the philosophy familiar to us,
> which remained predominant in the West.)

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Germany has been at the forefront of this recent trend toward popularization, as reported in a recent number of *Der Spiegel* (26/1996). Vittorio Hösle, a noted Hegelian at the University of Essen, has produced a "philosophical correspondence for children and adults" (1996), in which a twelve-year-old girl is introduced into a "Café of Dead Philosophers." The trendy philosopher from Karlsruhe, Peter Sloterdijk, himself a talk-show star, edits a series of philosophical readers under the title Philosophy Now!

Other publishers have brought out collections of aphorisms for New Age managers: *With Plato to Profits* or *Nietzsche for the Stressed Out.* Heidegger can be located on a home page on the Internet (http://www.connect.net/ron/heid.html). And Peter Bürger, a professor of Romance languages and literatures at the University of Bremen, best known for books on post-modernism and the theory of the avant-garde, has written, under the title *The Tears of Odysseus* (*Die Tränen des Odysseus,* 1993) a fictionalizing introduction to contemporary French philosophy. The episodes revolve around a fifty-year-old secondary-school teacher of literature, identified only as S.Z., whose views were shaped by the thoughts and events of the 1960s. A class for advanced students on Adorno and the Frankfurt School is disrupted by the deconstructionist ideas introduced by his star pupil; and in a weekly reading circle with younger colleagues he is reluctantly forced to come to grips with the ideas of Derrida, Blanchot, Lacan, Bataille, and Paul de Man. (Bürger also uses the familiar post-modern device, which goes back to German Romanticism, of introducing his own name and works into the fictive discussions.)

What is new about all these books is the determined consistency with which philosophy is fictionalized, versified, and illustrated in them. A decade ago Rebecca Goldstein, who got her Ph.D. in philosophy from Princeton, published *The Mind-Body Problem* (1983), which is among other things a barely concealed roman à clef set in an intellectual enclave of Princeton University. A bright young graduate student of philosophy named Renée Feuer, who has come to Princeton from Barnard, is captivated by, and then marries, the mathematical genius, Noam Himmel. Renée, like her namesake Descartes, is obsessed with the classic mind-body problem and is writing a never-finished dissertation on the subject.

With her commitment to life and sexuality, she embodies the "body" side of the equation (*Feuer* means "fire" in German. Get it?) in the union with the brilliant Himmel (which means *sky* or *heaven*), who represents pure intellect, reason, or "mind." The tensions and misunderstandings almost cause the marriage to fall apart until Noam confesses to Renée that his apparent mistreatment of her stems not from

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contempt and indifference, as she suspected, but from his realization that, at age forty, he has outgrown his genius.

The novel—Goldstein could be called in one sense a feminist Chaim Potok—is much concerned with questions of Jews in a goyish environment. The heroine's obsession with the mind-body problem not only provides the thematic framework for the plot; it also triggers a number of philosophical disquisitions. Moreover, she tends to see people and things in images drawn from the history of philosophy: "Talking with Ned is like falling down the rabbit hole into a Leibnizian universe. The man is a closed system, a self-determining entelechy." And precisely that impulse generates the polemical thrust of the novel: for Renée Feuer finds herself in a department of philosophy that has taken the "linguistic turn" away from metaphysics to language—a turn that has increasingly sterilized philosophy in the twentieth century. "Instead of wrestling with the large, messy questions that have occupied previous centuries of ethicists," she learns shortly after her arrival in Princeton, "one should examine the rules that govern words like 'good' and 'ought.'" She realizes to her dismay that "[she] was to spend the rest of [her] philosophical life thinking about language."

Goldstein's novel does not aspire to the totality of the recent works under discussion. The plot and characters are based on a classic philosophical conundrum, but there is no systematic presentation of Western philosophy as in Gaarder's novel, Williams's *Pooh*, or Geldsetzer's verse-history. Yet the catalyst for *The Mind-Body Problem* is ultimately the same as that which prompted the recent fictions, the talk shows, the home pages, and other popularizations: a profound dismay at the "linguistic turn" that has professionalized philosophy and made university philosophy largely irrelevant for thoughtful men and women. Gaarder, Williams, Geldsetzer, the authors of the illustrated histories and introductions, as well as Rebecca Goldstein are striving, each in his or her own way, to expose the continuing relevance of the ancient philosophical questions, to liberate philosophy from the graduate seminar, and to return it to all thinking people—the imaginative secondary-school student, the TV viewer or Web crawler, even the professional with a sense of humor (and an interest in history).

It is worth pausing to distinguish between works of the sort we have been discussing and the genre of fictionalizing biographies. While the life of Immanuel Kant, who never left his hometown of Königsberg and whose daily routine was famously regulated with the precision of clockwork, may not be the stuff of fiction, it is not difficult to imagine a swashbuckling romance starring Descartes or a steamy political thriller featuring Martin Heidegger. But with philosophers—more so

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than in the case of writers, musicians, or painters—the work is often wholly independent of the life. In his "Reply to Criticisms" (1944) Bertrand Russell pointed out that there was "no necessary connection between my views on social questions and my views on logic and epistemology." Even when we have the life of the philosopher, we rarely have the thought that justified our interest in the man.

In the past ten years several novelists have turned to the lives of philosophers for their material. Irvin D. Yalom's *When Nietzsche Wept* (1992) is based on an imaginary incident in 1882, when the German philosopher was allegedly persuaded by Lou Andreas Salomé to consult Dr. Josef Breuer for relief from his migraines. The story, told from Breuer's point of view, contains interesting passages on nineteenth-century Viennese medical practices and the early history of psychotherapy; and it moves toward a paradoxical reversal when Nietzsche cures Breuer's obsession with Bertha Pappenheim (known from her case history as Anna O.). But Yalom, a professor of psychiatry at Stanford, is interested in the despair that torments Nietzsche and Breuer; we see the man himself wholly from the standpoint of his therapist; we learn nothing at all about Nietzsche's thought.

A similar indirection is evident in Henrik Stangerup's novel *The Seducer: It Is Hard To Die in Dieppe* (1985). Stangerup, a Danish journalist and novelist, initially contemplated a novel on Kierkegaard, "only to discover that it was impossible since Kierkegaard himself had written it, over and over again." Instead, while co-editing with Roger Poole a popular Kierkegaard reader entitled *The Laughter Is On My Side* (1989), he approached his subject from a different angle: that of Peder Ludvig Møller, a leading literary critic and notorious womanizer who provided the model for Johannes the Seducer in Kierkegaard's *Either/Or* (1843).

Møller set off the most furious literary controversy in the history of Scandinavian literature when he wrote a caustic review of Kierkegaard's *Concluding Unscientific Postscript.* Kierkegaard responded by exposing Møller as the editor of the satirical political weekly *The Corsair,* thus spoiling his hopes for a university appointment. Møller, in turn, commissioned the series of now notorious caricatures of Kierkegaard, which ran in *The Corsair* for the next half year, literally driving Kierkegaard off the streets of Copenhagen as a figure of ridicule. Stangerup's novel offers a lively portrayal of nineteenth-century *vie de bohème* and enough salacious scenes to justify Møller's reputation as a roué. But from Møller's perspective we hardly expect a balanced portrait of Kierkegaard, who is depicted as the loathsome "Sören-Leap-into-Print," a "petulant midget" with a "dwarfish, tensed body" and "with the unsated eyes and the peacock strut" who leaves a prostitute

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feeling that she has been "ravished by a drooling ape." Needless to say, despite the author's evident knowledgeability, we learn little about Kierkegaard's ideas from this novel.

Probably no philosopher has elicited more biographical and fictional attention than Ludwig Wittgenstein, whose eventful life cries out for narrative: childhood and youth as scion of a powerful, wealthy family in fin-de-siècle Vienna; study at Cambridge with Bertrand Russell and G. E. Moore; self-imposed isolation in a remote cabin in Norway; service with distinction in World War I; internment as a POW in Italy; experience as a village schoolmaster in rural Austria; experiments as an architect in Vienna of the 1920s; and finally a lectureship at Cambridge, punctuated by wartime service in a London hospital—the whole story spiced with anecdotes of secret philanthropy and tales of homosexual adventure. With a life like that, who needs philosophy?

No writer dedicated himself more obsessively to Wittgenstein than his fellow Austrian, Thomas Bernhard. His novel *Correction* (1975) comprises the firsthand account by an Austrian intellectual who comes to a remote Austrian village to edit the papers of his friend Roithamer, a Cambridge scientist who constructed an elaborate theoretical system around the habitation cone that he designed and built for his sister. Bernhard's autobiographical fiction, *Wittgenstein's Nephew* (1982), approaches the philosopher through the author's friendship with his nephew. The play *Ritter, Dene, Voss* (1984) depicts the anxieties suffered by Wittgenstein and his two sisters under the watchful eyes of huge family portraits. In none of the three works, however, do we get a glimpse of Wittgenstein's thought. Despite Bernhard's typically Austrian fascination with the problematics of language as evidenced in the *Tractatus*, as a writer he is haunted by the exemplarity of Wittgenstein's life as the individual striving to liberate himself from the constraints of a domineering family and the alienated intellectual in Austrian society.

Bruce Duffy's impressive novel, *The World As I Found It* (1987), makes the bold attempt to fictionalize the interlocking lives of three philosophers: Wittgenstein, Bertrand Russell, and G. E. Moore. The fiction plays skillfully with the tensions arising from various contrasts among the Cambridge colleagues: Wittgenstein's restlessness and longing for isolation is played off against Moore's comfortable domesticity and Russell's cosmopolitan careerism; Wittgenstein's homosexual trysts in the Vienna Prater (even though these have been discounted by such recent biographers as Brian McGuinness and Roy Monk) serve as a counterfoil to Moore's uxorial satisfactions and Russell's extramarital adventures: the mystical tendencies and logical rigor of the *Tractatus* stand between Moore's *Principia Ethica* and

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Russell's *Principles of Mathematics* as well as his later popular tracts. The atmosphere of Klimt's Vienna, the Norwegian mountains, trench warfare on the eastern front, village life in rural Austria, the Apostles' Cambridge, Russell's Beacon Hill school—all this is rendered with a cultural historian's familiarity and a novelist's command of scene. But what is missing from the equation is the thought—Wittgenstein's, Russell's, or Moore's. To be sure, there are occasional hints at philosophy, as in the fleeting discussion of the *Tractatus* at Wittgenstein's *Viva* for his doctorate; but during the exam Russell is distracted by a sexual encounter taking place outside his study window, and the discussion remains as superficial as the other occasional capsule precepts inserted from time to time—a memory jog for the initiate, but hardly illuminating for the uninformed reader. In sum, the biographical novels fictionalize the life, not the thought. In contrast to the works discussed above—or to such straightforward intellectual biographies as McGuinness's *Wittgenstein: A Life*—they seek to humanize the philosopher, not to communicate the philosophy.

The impulse to popularize philosophy, to make it accessible to the layman, is of course nothing new. During the Enlightenment, as a reaction against scholastic pedantry (the seventeenth-century equivalent of much contemporary academic philosophy), philosophers wrote in the vernacular rather than in Latin; it also produced simplifying introductions to philosophical works—for example, Francesco Algarotti's *Il Neutonianismo per le dame* (1738) and Voltaire's *Eléments de la philosophie de Newton* (1738). Even more immediate than these were the *contes philosophiques*, in which contemporary ideas and theories were brought to vivid fictional life, as in the satires in the form of travel narratives known to us from Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) and Voltaire's *Candide* (1759).

It is this Enlightenment tradition that Steven Lukes follows in his entertaining "comedy of ideas," *The Curious Enlightenment of Professor Caritat* (1995). Lukes, a scholar of political philosophy and social theory who taught for many years at Oxford, depicts the adventures of Nicolas Caritat, a professor of Enlightenment thought living in the country of Militaria and cut off from colleagues abroad because the legitimate government has recently been overthrown by a military junta. His son Marcus is away fighting with the guerrillas against the regime, and his daughter Elize works underground as a human rights activist. Because of his isolation, Caritat's imaginary debates with the thinkers of the Enlightenment afford an increasingly important source of consolation.

The story begins when Caritat is arrested on the grounds that his

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writings have been taken up by opposition groups. The leaders of the junta, whose priority is order and security, demand a statement from Caritat renouncing Optimism and denouncing those who believe in it. (That night in his cell, Caritat holds a debate with Kant on the question "What Is Enlightenment?") The junta, tempting him with offers of wealth, power, and status, is supported in its efforts by an opportunistic psychiatrist named Globulus, who has sold out to the new regime and become its Minister of Culture. The whole illusion of Progress, he tells Caritat—citing specifically "our French philosophical friends" Foucault, Lyotard, Baudrillard, and Kristeva—is nothing but "an exhausted 'meta-narrative.'" Caritat is rescued by a former student, Justin, who now works for the opposition. Arguing that he has a responsibility to his former students, because he inspired them with their motivating belief in Optimism, they give him a new passport under the name of Dr. Pangloss (by which the author signals his indebtedness to *Candide*) and send him on a mission "to find us the best possible world."

Caritat-Pangloss's travels take him first to Calcula, the capital of Utilitaria, a country founded by Jeremy Bentham. Taken in by Gregory Maximand, a specialist on Helvétius, he soon learns that Utilitaria, while it has excellent systems for wealth, health care, and education, lacks the concepts of "gratitude," "resentment," or "rights." Even the courts operate according to the principle *Utilitas populi suprema lex.* Appointed to the University, Caritat is expected to deliver his inaugural lecture on the irrelevance of Enlightenment ideas under the heading "Breaking Free from the Past." (This generates a nocturnal conversation with Volney on the decline and ruin of human glory.) Caritat is again rescued from his predicament by a resistance group—this time terrorists who hope to obtain a large ransom for his release. But the rulers of Utilitaria calculate that it is not in their interest to redeem Caritat, who seems doomed until his release is negotiated by the Reverend Goddington Thwaite from the neighboring country of Communitaria.

Communitaria, a parliamentary democracy committed to multiculturalism and the politics of difference, has thirty-four ethnic communities and seventeen religions, each demanding absolute respect for itself and each incapable of tolerating the least criticism of its beliefs. Indeed, no judgments are possible about the validity of other cultures or beliefs because all meaning is socially constructed. (A subplot, à la Salman Rushdie, concerns a musician who is being persecuted by his former ethnic and religious compatriots because he dared to compose a rock opera poking gentle fun at his own people. This episode prompts Caritat's nocturnal disquisition with Voltaire on tolerance.)

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Again Caritat is offered a position at the "Unidiversity" and is invited to deliver an inaugural lecture on "Why the Enlightenment Project Failed" (because it was ethnocentric and contained the roots of all past oppression!). But before the lecture can take place, Caritat is brought up on (false) charges of sexual harassment and ethnic slander by the Body of Gender at the Unidiversity. (This chapter of Lukes's novel, in its plot and its satire, bears a close—and totally random—resemblance to Dietrich Schwanitz's hilarious satire of academic life in Germany, *Der Campus* [1995].)

Caritat-Pangloss decides to leave Communitaria and catches a train to a city with the promising name of Freedom. (En route he has a lengthy dream about the country of Proletaria, where two friendly citizens named Karl and Fred explain how the state has withered away, along with the legal system, the market, and all other features of bourgeois capitalism. But the workers' paradise of Marx and Engels turns out to be, after all, nothing but a dream.) On his arrival he learns that Freedom is the capital of Libertaria, a country in the process of the total privatization of all government. Taking a room in the Pilgrim's Rest Hotel (the author's gesture toward Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*), Caritat looks for a job; but his prospects at the university are drastically curtailed by the privatization. He tries to survive by assuming the guise of Professor Globulus at an international conference of psychiatrists. But just when he has been offered a lucrative consultancy in psychiatry, the asylum is privatized, and the patients, "victims of social concern," are decarcerated and turned out on the streets.

Having heard rumors about Egalitaria, a legendary country to the north, he sets out for the border town of Minerva, accompanied by a talking owl (Hegel's owl of Minerva), who reminds him that true philosophy lies in grasping the meaning of things past. The owl points out that each of the countries he visited was devoted to the pursuit of a single objective, but a pursuit so single-minded that it became fanatical: order and security in Militaria, the maximization of welfare and happiness in Utilitaria, stable collective identity in Communitaria, the delirious vision of freedom and harmony in Proletaria, and the protection of individuals and their property in Libertaria. Thus every dream turned into a nightmare. "None of these ideals is worth anything without the others."

Lukes clearly owes more to Voltaire than to Bunyan. While he employs the techniques of allegory, his purpose is satire, which, as Caritat explains in conversation with the fanatical priests of Communitaria, has as its goal "to censure human wickedness and folly by making those vices appear ridiculous." In each country Caritat-Pangloss first hears the positive theory from its advocates, but soon the

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negative aspects are exposed by the reality of daily life. Like Gaarder, however, Lukes seeks to attain his goal by presenting his ideas in a form that is appealing to the non-specialist: in Caritat's letters to his former student and to his son and daughter. In the process the reader is exposed not only to the principal theories of political philosophy but also to the main thinkers of the European Enlightenment.

Universities occupy an important place in Lukes's *conte philosophique,* for Caritat repeatedly is offered professorships, only to lose them again through no fault of his own. Another professor under duress is the central figure in Norman N. Holland's "postmodern mystery," *Death in a Delphi Seminar* (1995). Holland, known for his books and articles on literature and psychology and reader-response theory, has given us a remarkable murder mystery in which the murder takes place in a graduate seminar on literature and psychology and the mystery is solved by the techniques of reader-response analysis. Using the post-modern device of authorial intrusion, Holland has written his novel as a first-person account in his own name, and the action involves a graduate course that he taught for years at the State University of New York at Buffalo. It is called the Delphi seminar (as he explains to the detective in charge of the case) because its motto is the commandment on the temple of Apollo at Delphi, *gnothi seauton* or "know thyself." (The novel was published by SUNY Press in a series entitled The Margins of Literature.)

The plot is triggered by the sudden death of a member of the seminar, who sits on a poisoned tack just as she is on the point of giving her seminar presentation. It turns out ultimately that the death was a suicide motivated by the student's desperate attempt to frame another member of the seminar. But before that conclusion is reached, the investigation—by a detective who is introduced as a respected off-Broadway playwright—reveals that virtually every member of the seminar had a motive for murdering their colleague, a young woman heartily detested by all. The motives and characters of the suspects are exposed by a careful textual analysis of the "cognitive style" in two papers that each one has written for the seminar: a response to a poem by Denise Levertov ("The Snake") and another in which each member of the seminar reveals to the others some important personal fact about herself or himself. As a newspaper account of the crime explains: "Lt. Rhodes called the case unique in that both the crime and its solution rest on the methods of Mr. Holland. His seminar teaches, as it is called by English professors, reader-response theory. Students distribute to one another loose, narrative responses to literary texts showing that no correct readings of those texts are possible." As Holland elaborates on another occasion, people come

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away from a performance of *The Taming of the Shrew* with certain feelings about the play. "Differences, but, of course, there are a lot of samenesses, too. . . . We critics need a psychological model to explain both the samenesses and the differences." The seminar attempts to determine the shared techniques that account for the similarities as well as the unique uses that account for the individual differences.

The plot is complicated by the circumstance that Professor Holland is under constant pressure by an ambitious and hostile chairwoman, Professor Badger, who regards his seminar as inappropriate "touchy-feely stuff" and is worried that the president and trustees will ask "all sorts of difficult questions" about his questionable methods and cut the department's budget. Another complication goes back to a scandal at Yale, where the victim and the principal suspect were students and lovers before coming to Buffalo: the young Frenchman plagiarized the senior thesis of his more brilliant woman friend, but since her accusation could not be proved, both students were denied admission to the graduate program at Yale and ended up at Buffalo. This circumstance allows Holland to introduce into his novel a critique of deconstruction, of which the two students were both products. The detective expresses his astonishment that the plagiarism—the deed that eventually motivated the suicide as a desperate act of revenge against the plagiarist—was not more seriously punished at Yale since, after all, plagiarism is "the primal academic crime." Holland explains:

> It used to be but, as I think I told you, one central idea of modern literary theory is that the author is dead. There isn't any author, really. It started with Nietzsche. The "subject" is only a fiction. A construction. Something we posit to make sense of events. Foucault says, what we designate as an author is only a projection of the way we think about literary texts.

As a result of their varied backgrounds, the students bring to the seminar readings based on Derrida, Lacan, and Freud, on feminism, Marxism, and other current theories. Eventually the case is solved by explaining a series of absences (another theoretically fashionable concept): the absence of a computer file, the absence of a set of papers, the absence of a thumbtack prick when someone else, considerably lighter than the victim herself, sits down in the chair.

Like the tales by Gaarder and Lukes, Holland's fiction is an attempt to explain theory—in this case, literary theory—to an interested but non-specialist audience: the detective with literary credentials. Unlike most other academic novels with a literary context, Holland's actually uses literary theory as a plot device. In the academic mysteries by Amanda Cross (the pen name for Carolyn Heilbrun, professor

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emerita of English literature at Columbia University) literature usually plays a role since her sleuth, Kate Fansler, is herself a professor of Victorian literature. In *The James Joyce Murder* (1967), for instance, all the chapter headings are taken from the titles of stories in Joyce's *Dubliners*, and the plot concerns the theft of the manuscript of an unpublished story from that classic collection; but the story ultimately has more to do with the politics of publishing and academic reputations than with literary analysis. (As far as the plot is concerned, it could just as well have revolved around any other legendary manuscript—say, a "lost" sonnet by Shakespeare.) Similarly, in *Poetic Justice* (1970) all the chapters are introduced with epigraphs from the poetry of W. H. Auden, his poems are frequently quoted in the conversations, and Auden himself makes an appearance in one scene. Yet the plot, which involves a murder by poisoning, has nothing to do with Auden and little to do with literature—though a lot to do with university politics. Again, the quotations are quite incidental. Holland's novel, in contrast, incorporates the very kind of literary analysis that the author professes, and it introduces—as motive, as content, as clues—various other contemporary approaches to literary theory. It exemplifies literary theory in the same way that the tales by Gaarder and Lukes embody philosophy and political theory.

Can we detect any common denominators linking these various fictionalizations of philosophy and theory by Norwegian, English, and American authors? First, Gaarder, Lukes, and Holland, along with Geldzahler, Bürger, and the compilers of the various illustrated introductions, are teachers of their subjects. We are not dealing with professional novelists who appropriate the lives of philosophers as content for their fictions. Instead, we have professional scholars who appropriate fiction as the mode for their philosophy and theory. Second, all three authors, have adapted literary forms that are representative of the disciplines they profess. Gaarder's philosophizing pair—Sophie and Alberto—revert to imaginative variations on the Socratic dialogue. Lukes's Professor Caritat experiences his allegorical adventures in the form of the Enlightenment *conte philosophique.* And Holland's fictional self presents his plot as—what else?—a literary seminar exercise.

Third, all three writers explicitly address their works to non-specialists (the playwrighting detective) or to young people (the fifteen-year-old Sophie and Hilde, or Caritat's students and grown children). In short, they hope to capture a new audience for their subject—an audience not attracted, or even driven off, by the fads and theories that currently rule our schools and universities. Gaarder's Sophie experiences the shocked reaction of her teachers when, awakened by

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her exposure to philosophical ideas, she introduces independent thought into her school exercises. Holland satirizes the commitment to post-modern literary theory that has seized almost dictatorial control of many English departments and reduced enrollments in literature courses. Lukes exposes the silly excesses that have divided our universities, and dumbed down their standards, in the name of multiculturalism and diversity.

The "linguistic turn" in the university, the "dehumanization" of the humanities, the "hegemony" of theory have in recent years come under frequent and sometimes uncomprehending attack by critics outside the academy. These fictions suggest that professors within the institutions are now addressing the same concerns in a manner at once more knowledgeable, more playful, and, in a word, more humanistic. At the same time, the writers are also fulfilling a program as venerable as the techniques they have adopted. In one of the most remarkable documents of German Romanticism, a statement on the "System of Transcendental Idealism," we read: "Until we make ideas aesthetic, that is mythological, they will have no interest for the people; and, vice-versa, until mythology becomes rational, the philosopher will be ashamed of it." These words were co-written in 1796 by the budding philosophers Hegel and Schelling along with their former college roommate, the poet Hölderlin.

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The Way of It

E. B. DE VITO

At odd times, I have wondered:
is this the way of it?

does it all come together
on some unconsidered sphere:

a strange world, where impossibly,
like the boy and the crocodile,
and the girl with a dread of water,
each keeps a rendezvous
with his greatest fear?

Is the ultimate biographer, the pathologist:
his art, the jewel tints of ailing organs,
his world seen through a microscope,
his milieu, an antiseptic room,
its walls an invitation to a stir of echoes?
but who, though with the casebook sealed,
finds, even in the answers, questions?

The Greeks acknowledged
that each has a fatal flaw

but did not add
what so often follows in our wake:

that, after all, the way of it:
the path we must—or choose to take,
may be (or perhaps, even should be)
stumbled on by mistake.

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The Nuremberg Trial

Fifty Years After

MICHAEL R. MARRUS

"The greatest trial in history," as Sir Norman Birkett, the associate British judge on the International Military Tribunal referred to the trial of the major German war criminals at Nuremberg, has inevitably been exposed to a wave of historical scrutiny flying under the flag of "revisionism"—a de-mythologizing of important episodes of the Second World War, invariably discrediting long-cherished assumptions of Allied rectitude in the war against the Axis fifty years ago. While applauding in principle a re-examination of old myths, I, as a professional historian, want to report my unease with some of the furor that has attended upon some so-called revisionist controversies in popular forums. More often than not, purported exposés of, for example, the Allied aerial bombardment of Germany or the American decision to drop the atomic bomb on Japan—to take the two most celebrated instances—have breathlessly announced findings long known to researchers in the field; and have also prompted unwarranted moral judgments that apply our standards, our appreciations, our sensibilities, our knowledge, and our hindsight to the events of half a century ago.

Nuremberg is a case in point. Ultimately, it seems to me, there comes a time when we have to distance ourselves from the events of the past in an effort to understand. With Nuremberg, as with other events of the Second World War, I think it is high time to take up some frequently advanced challenges to Norman Birkett's view—challenges, I might add, that were advanced during the course of the trial itself in 1945–46 and have been ever since.

How did the Nuremberg Trial come about? From the Anglo-American standpoint, Nuremberg arose from a circumstance that revisionist historians have actively addressed over the past twenty years or more—the failure of Western governments to respond in any significant way to the insistent pleas of the victims of Nazi atrocities in occupied Europe. Since the beginning of the war, and particularly from mid-1942, appeals rained down on Western capitals from governments in exile, Jewish representatives, and humanitarian organizations to do something about Nazi atrocities—to retaliate, mount rescue operations, welcome refugees, or whatever else was possible. Little or nothing was done. Reluctant to disturb war-making priorities, London and Washington contented themselves with issuing statements. These statements, however, pointed unambiguously to post-war retribution. "The American people not only sympathize with all victims of Nazi crimes," President Franklin Roosevelt wrote to Rabbi Stephen Wise, president of the American Jewish Congress in July 1942, "but will hold the perpetrators of these crimes to strict accountability in a day of reckoning which will surely come." Individuals would be held responsible, FDR and Winston Churchill repeatedly assured all who would listen. "None who participate in these acts of savagery shall go unpunished," Roosevelt insisted two years later. "The United Nations have made it clear that they will pursue the guilty and deliver them up in order that justice be done."

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Fearing that they would trigger German retaliation by punishing war criminals before hostilities ended, the Western Allies refused to define their intentions more precisely. The Soviets, already bearing the most ferocious Nazi atrocities, were less reluctant, and indeed moved on their own to try some German criminals in the latter part of the war. In the autumn of 1943, however, all three Allied leaders were ready to take another step on war crimes. In November the Big Three declared that those responsible for Nazi atrocities "will be sent back to the countries in which their abominable deeds were done, in order that they may be judged and punished according to the laws of these liberated countries and of the free Governments which will be created therein." Further: "Major criminals whose offenses have no particular geographic localization" were to be "punished by the joint declaration of the Governments of the Allies."

As the war drew to a close, the British and the Americans debated how to achieve these ends. London seemed reluctant to punish major Nazi war criminals through judicial proceedings. Uneasy about how a trial of the highest ranking Nazis would unfold (until the spring of 1945 it was expected that Goebbels, Himmler, and Hitler himself might well be in the dock), and uncertain about legal questions, the British favored "executive action"—proceeding summarily to identify high-ranking Nazi criminals, after which they would be shot. On the American side, the question of what to do with the Nazi leaders was caught up in the wider dispute over how to deal with the defeated Axis countries, a debate crystallized by the issuing of a very harsh plan for a vanquished Germany by the American Secretary of the Treasury, Henry Morgenthau, Jr. Convinced that the Morgenthau Plan would be a disaster for the peace, prosperity, and stability of Europe, Henry L. Stimson, the more urbane Secretary of War, urged a radically different policy, seeking to promote economic recovery and development by utilizing German industrial capacity. Part of his response to Morgenthau involved a proposal for a trial before an international tribunal rather than summary proceedings and swift execution. Punishment of the Nazi leaders, Stimson told FDR in September 1944, should be "in a dignified manner consistent with the advance of civilization." This would be "the most effective way of making a record of the Nazi system of terrorism and of the effort of the Allies to terminate this system and prevent its recurrence."

As he often did on issues of high sensitivity, Roosevelt hesitated to commit himself. Consequently, the Allies failed to clarify their intentions at the Yalta Conference in early 1945. Then, on April 12, Roosevelt died. His successor, Harry Truman, promptly accepted the wisdom of a trial, based on a model proposed by the War Department, and he convinced the British, the Russians, and the French, who were brought into the discussions. Following agreement in principle at the United Nations founding conference in San Francisco, experts from the four occupying powers met in London in June to work out the details. On August 8, 1945, the representatives reached agreement on a charter establishing an International Military Tribunal (IMT) "for the just and prompt trial and punishment of the major war criminals of the European Axis." Article 6 of the charter declared that the following were "crimes coming within the jurisdiction of the Tribunal": "Crimes against Peace," "War Crimes," and "Crimes against Humanity." The course was set for the Nuremberg Trial.

Note an important point from this very hurried sketch of the origins of the Nuremberg Trial: the contemporary alternative to a judicial proceeding, the alternative presented at the time, that is, was not a differently balanced judicial solution—although variations were certainly discussed, as we shall see. The most energetically pursued alternative to the IMT was, quite simply, swift execution.

A word, for a moment, about some other alternatives that critics have proposed over the years. Some have suggested that the trial should have been turned over to neutral countries and that it would have been fairer to have had judges from such countries on the bench. Never, so far as I can tell, was such a proposal advanced in the discussions leading to the IMT, and it is impossible to imagine any of the Allies agreeing to such an idea. At the time, of course, neutrality meant not having participated in the war against Hitler. Neutrality had none of the allure of rectitude it came to have (for some, at least) during the Cold War; while occasionally it was acknowledged that the relatively few neutral countries (and

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remember, these included Spain and Portugal as well as Sweden and Switzerland) had failed to take sides against Hitler as a result of *force majeure*—the blandishments of the Nazis—neutrals were widely assumed to have attuned their policies opportunistically, sacrificing principle and sometimes humanitarianism in civilization's darkest hour.

Should German judges have participated, or should the entire business have been turned over to them? Once again, there is no indication that this notion was ever countenanced at the time. Feeling in every Allied country ran strongly against the defeated Germans, and public opinion would have likely revolted against the idea of German participation—even that of anti-Nazi judges, assuming that these could have been found. Very much on the minds of Western representatives was their experience following the First World War when, at the insistence of vulnerable German politicians in the fledgling Weimar Republic, the adjudication of war criminals was assigned to the German supreme court, sitting in Leipzig. The Leipzig trials produced the most meager results imaginable: of nine hundred suspected criminals on the original Allied list, only twelve were eventually tried; of that number six were convicted and sentenced to terms of imprisonment ranging from four years to a mere two months. As a result, this model was repeatedly scorned as one that should be rejected—a "farce," it was frequently called. German opinion—or at least that opinion which the Allied occupation allowed expression—hardly suggested a more independent-minded environment for a trial. The fiercely vindictive reaction of anti-Nazi Germans to the acquittal of Hans Fritzsche, Franz von Papen, and Hjalmar Schacht, insisting that they face trial once again, is a case in point.

None of these alternatives, one must repeat, even occurred to Allied decision makers at the time. In Washington, London, Paris, and Moscow, the trial of German war criminals was understood as part of the wider and more difficult problem of how to deal with the defeated Nazi state. Germany's unconditional surrender, it was understood, entitled the four victorious Allies to act as "supreme authority with respect to Germany"—with rights to legislate, adjudicate, and administer. The responsibility was theirs, and having been persuaded, with some difficulty, that summary execution was not a desirable solution, the way was cleared for the Nuremberg Trial.

Were there fundamental flaws in the charges against the twenty-two German leaders put on trial? More specifically, were the accused obliged to answer for actions rendered illegal afterwards—ex post facto—violating, that is to say, a fundamental principle of justice? Without going deeply into the legal side of this accusation, which was vigorously contested by the prosecution and which was discussed in the judgment, a few points may put it into historical perspective. As we shall see, the prosecuting lawyers never conceded that the acts for which the accused were indicted were not illegal at the time that they were committed. Indeed, they took great pains to establish that the charges in the Nuremberg Indictment were grounded in international law—the Hague and Geneva Conventions, as well as what they argued at great length was a kind of common law of the nations—not the acts of an international legislature, which did not exist, but rather a body of law that had evolved over the course of time, particularly during the interwar period, through treaties and other international agreements. Learned opinion divided on this question, but in the United States at least, where this question was extensively debated in scholarly periodicals as well as more popular journals, the prosecutors could point to a very solid body of opinion that told in their favor.

Perhaps more important, few contemporary observers considered that, as a result of ex post facto accusations, the Nuremberg Trials had been rendered *unfair*. This charge, after all, rested on the idea that the accused, when they committed what were later called crimes, had no idea that they were acting illegally. So heinous were the deeds that they were alleged to have done, and so solemn were the warnings issued during the war against those who committed these acts, that, in general terms at least, this criticism seemed widely to have been without merit. One American expert, Sheldon Glueck of Harvard, made the point in the *Harvard Law Review*:

> Surely . . . Hitler, Himmler, Goering, Ribbentrop, Frank, Keitel, Doenitz, and the rest of the unholy alliance in supreme authority in Nazi Germany knew full well that murder is murder,

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whether wholesale or retail, whether committed in pursuance of a gigantic conspiracy to disregard all treaties and wage lawless wars or of a smaller conspiracy evolved by a group of domestic murderers. Surely, also, the accused knew that they could be executed for their deeds without being granted the privilege of any trial at all. Can they now be heard to complain that they had no notice that they would have to stand trial under an interpretation of international law which they do not like because they deem it to involve retroactivity?

This is not to say that the charges against the accused were equally grounded in custom, precedent, and legal enactment. Nor is it the case that the accused were equally guilty, as charged. After a year of courtroom sessions the judgment of the IMT made important distinctions, failed to accept some of the prosecutors' contentions while accepting others, and passed judgment variously on the accused. While twelve of those indicted were sentenced to death, three were acquitted. Some sense of the complications and shortcomings of the charges may be seen by looking at each of the counts with which defendants were charged.

The most conventional of these, Count Three, was War Crimes, based largely on the Hague and Geneva Conventions. About the legality of these charges, which applied to atrocities committed against both military personnel and civilians, there was little dispute. And there has been little challenge since, save, as we shall see, over the question of *tu quoque* ("you did it too").

Count Four, Crimes against Humanity, was a novel charge, later seen by some to be the major innovation of Nuremberg and a significant advance in the codification of international law. For reasons having largely to do with terminology, I think, Crimes against Humanity was wrongly seen to designate crimes of unprecedented magnitude, such as the murder of European Jews, deeds that in their singular inhumanity represented what the French prosecutor, François de Menthon called "crimes against the human status." In fact, Crimes against Humanity were conceived of for largely technical reasons: they were an effort to include among the indictable offenses the persecution of various groups (such as German Jews, for example)—acts that might otherwise, because of the victims' nationality, escape prosecution. Here, too, the charges of ex post facto litigation might have been relevant, although few defense counsel seemed to have the stomach to raise this argument. Coming in practice to stand largely for the crimes against the Jews, the effect of the evidence of this slaughter on the court was so devastating that the legality of the charge itself went largely unchallenged. Instead, some defendants indicted on this count contended that they had not done what they were accused of doing. Sixteen defendants were found guilty of this charge, and two who were indicted (Hitler's deputy Führer Rudolf Hess and propagandist Hans Fritzsche) were acquitted.

Much weaker, from a legal point of view, was Count Two of the indictment, Crimes against Peace, in which defendants were charged with participation in the planning, preparation, initiation, and waging of specific wars in violations of international treaties. Open to *tu quoque* arguments as well as to accusations that these charges were based on an ex post facto definition of criminality, this count was never understood or accepted by the French, and carried with it the obvious potential of embarrassing the Russians. It was the United States that had insisted upon this charge. During the negotiations in preparation for the trial, the American chief prosecutor and Supreme Court Justice Robert H. Jackson insisted that the trial vindicate Washington's decision to pursue the war against Nazi Germany. The United States had fought, he told his listeners, to stop aggression. Aggression was the criminal core of Nazism, from which everything else flowed. "Our view," he told his British, French, and Soviet counterparts, "is that this isn't merely a case of showing that these Nazi Hitlerite people failed to be gentlemen in war; it is a matter of their having designed an illegal attack on the international peace . . . and the other atrocities were all preparatory to it or done in execution of it."

In both law and evidence, the weakest count against the accused was the first, that which charged defendants with *conspiring* to commit the other crimes. Even more than Crimes against the Peace, this charge was an American product from first to last, having emerged from planners in the United States War Department with a view to addressing some of the problems facing the Americans with subsequent trials of Nazi criminals. The idea was

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that the accused Nazi leaders would stand in the dock in their own right but also in some sense as "representatives" of the major Reich organizations from which they came. Evidence used against those indicted would establish that these were criminal organizations, agents of a criminal conspiracy. And once this had been established, so the plan went, it would be easy, in subsequent trials, to declare others who had been part of those organizations similarly guilty—vastly facilitating adjudication and punishment.

In practice, Count One unnecessarily complicated the trial and failed to serve the purpose for which it was intended. While familiar to American and British lawyers, the concept of conspiracy was not understood in Continental legal practice. Not only did the German defense lawyers protest against the whole idea, the French and Russians also seemed to have trouble with the concept. Inevitably, evidence presented on Count One spilled across the rest of the prosecution's case—particularly Count Two, Crimes against Peace. The emphasis on conspiracy badly distorted the historical interpretation of Nazism presented to the IMT, putting undue emphasis on the coherence and foresight associated with Nazi criminality. The conspiracy charge, by general consensus, did not serve the cause of history well. On the other hand, Count One does not seem to have told heavily against the defense. The indictment charged all the defendants with this offense; in the end the Tribunal convicted only eight and acquitted twelve.

Finally, the indictment referred to six major organs of the Third Reich: the Reich Cabinet, Party leadership, the SS, the Gestapo, the General Staff, and the SA. Each was represented by counsel, and tens of thousands of Germans who had been members made submissions to the court. In retrospect, the identification of some of these groups seems to have been the result of overly hasty or careless research on the part of the prosecutors and reflected some misunderstanding of how the Reich worked. In the end, the judges found that three of the six were criminal within the meaning of the charter. The judgment distinguished among classes of members and nature of membership for future determination of individual guilt.

While bound by the terms of the charter and the indictment of the accused, defense lawyers repeatedly claimed that leaders of the countries that had organized the trial and were represented on the IMT were themselves guilty of crimes with which the Nazi leaders were charged. "*Tu quoque*," or "You did it too!" they said in effect. "If we are pronounced guilty, then you should be as well." Since the Nuremberg Trial, commentators have returned often to this claim and have benefited from evidence on the Allied prosecution of the war that has since come to light. Planning and waging aggressive war? The obvious countercharge was the Nazi-Soviet Pact of August 1939 and the Soviet attack on Poland. There was also the Soviet attack on Finland, the Baltic states, and later Bulgaria; other instances were the Anglo-French violations of Norwegian neutrality and the Allied expedition to attack that country. War crimes? Examples on the other side included the massacre of Polish officers in the Katyn Forest in Poland (a crime for which some defendants were indicted and which was discussed at length at Nuremberg, with strong evidence that the Russians had committed the crime), and the firebombing of German cities, alleged to have been out of all proportion to military necessity.

Then, as now, there were two implied alternatives: either the Germans ought not to have been indicted for these crimes, or Allied leaders ought also to have been brought to justice. Viewed historically, however, these criticisms seem utterly unreal. The Allied course was set in the direction of a trial at the end of the war. Given the depth of feeling on the subject of Axis war crimes in the broadest sense, there was simply no prospect, in 1945, that the authorities concerned would have accepted these alternatives. No responsible authority proposed that Nuremberg be constituted as a general inquiry into the conduct of the Second World War. Any such suggestion would have been considered outlandish at the time, and would not have secured the participation of any of the four victorious powers. That is why the IMT was established, in the words of the Nuremberg Charter, "for the just and prompt trial and punishment of the major war criminals of the European Axis."

"Do two wrongs make a right?" British Chief Prosecutor Sir Hartley Shawcross asked rhetorically in his summation. "Not in that international law which this Tribunal will adminis-

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ter," was his reply. This was the prosecution's chief response—along with angry denials of illegality by the Russians or embarrassed silence by the Westerners on the particularly obvious cases of Soviet wrongdoing. For historians, some of the most interesting parts of the Nuremberg proceedings are those in which the defense attorneys battled against all odds to have *tu quoque* arguments accepted. But from a legal standpoint, as the political scientist Otto Kirchheimer pointed out long ago, this insistence on "clean hands" has little legal standing—and thus was given little heed at the time. Such arguments, Kirchheimer observed, can be leveled against any type of terrestrial justice. A potent historical point, and perhaps a case for diminishing the historic standing of the IMT, it carried no weight at all as an argument on behalf of the twenty-two accused. The claim that "you did it too," that is to say, seems convincing only as a pointer to what Nuremberg might have been if the world had been an utterly different place than it was.

After half a century, I think we can consider Nuremberg as the product of its own time and place, rather than as a policy to be praised or condemned. Politically, the Nuremberg Trial occurred in a post-war climate in which Allied opinion ran powerfully against Germans and the German state. Everywhere in the Allied world the question of what to do with the Nazi leadership posed itself insistently in the last months of the war. And everywhere responses to the question of what to do were extremely harsh. Opinion surveys in Britain and the United States showed large pluralities or majorities supporting the swift execution, without trial, of Nazi leaders. When the French were asked in October 1944 about what to do with Hitler, 40 percent favored the option "shoot, kill, hang him," while 30 percent wanted "torture before killing him." Opinion everywhere, particularly in the occupied countries, favored a very harsh treatment of Germany. Judicial proceedings were always the view of a minority, and sometimes a tiny minority.

So in practical terms, the real alternative to Nuremberg was not a wider inquiry into war crimes committed by victors as well as vanquished, or a new venture into international adjudication by incorporating judges from countries that had not participated in the struggle—let alone judges from the defeated Axis powers. The real alternative, and what most people from Allied countries probably preferred, was a summary proceeding followed by speedy punishment—in all likelihood, death. Without American pressure against it, this would probably have taken place.

Critics of Nuremberg have made much of the presence of the Russians on the bench and the Tribunal's silence on the wartime atrocities of Stalin and his henchmen. Western participants were not unaware of these crimes. But Nuremberg, they felt, was not the place to deal with them. Mostly, they saw the trial as a last act of the Allied coalition against Nazi Germany. In retrospect, we should understand Nuremberg as occurring just as the Cold War storm was gathering—as tensions were rising and disputes were evident, but when the Allies, certainly many Americans among them, were eagerly hoping that these difficulties would be resolved. That is the most important reason why Westerners responsible for the trial were prepared to look the other way when it came to the Russians. They were not blind, but they preferred not to scrutinize their Soviet interlocutors too closely.

In this sense, there was a measure of idealism at Nuremberg that extended into other areas as well—the hope to lay the foundation for a new world order in which aggressive war would be universally condemned, in which the major powers, including the Russians, would work together in the interests of world peace, and in which the unity achieved in a common purpose could be extended to other areas of human affairs. Each of the great powers saw this new order somewhat differently. But each hoped to maintain some measure of collective action. A trial of the major German war criminals seemed like a reasonable project with which to begin.

In legal terms, there were undoubted flaws—pointed out at the time and subsequently. German critics of Nuremberg complained of the severe imbalance between the prosecution and the defense and challenged court procedures as well as the wider conception of the trial. At Nuremberg, they claimed, probably with some justice, the defense was at a significant disadvantage. More generally, Nuremberg was not everyone's sense of justice well administered. Those on the bench, the

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historian Bradley Smith observes, "were not jurists of long experience or towering stature." It may be right, as Norman Birkett noted during the proceedings, that "the standard of the court does not compare favorably with the highest Courts in England." The obvious response was that English courts worked with procedure honed by centuries of practice; at Nuremberg, everything was improvised.

A more serious question is what effect these and other flaws had upon the outcome of the trial. So far as the law is concerned, learned disputation was part of the trial itself, flourished in its wake, and is likely to continue indefinitely on the most fundamental questions. Examined historically, however, much of this debate may seem beside the point. For example, given the circumstances of 1945–46, it is highly implausible that any court judging high-ranking Nazis would have allowed a searching exploration of the injustices of the Treaty of Versailles in 1919—to take what was the demand most insistently pressed upon the IMT by defense lawyers. Defense attorneys repeatedly asked to present evidence on this great evil that they contended was at the root of Nazism; they should not have been surprised that they were forbidden to make this case.

Examining Nuremberg historically—considering the influence upon the proceedings of circumstances and opinions peculiar to the time—may help us understand the verdicts rendered by the court. It seems certain, for example, that Albert Speer's energetic anti-Communism and polished efforts to curry favor with the West told in his favor in the end—he received a sentence of twenty years, despite his having been deeply implicated in the use of slave labor and responsible for the death of hundreds of thousands. The contrast of Speer's fate with that of the rough-hewn Minister of Labor Fritz Sauckel, who was sentenced to hang, struck many at the time as anomalous. Concerns to punish "German militarism," seemingly embodied in *Wehrmacht* chiefs Wilhelm Keitel and Alfred Jodl, may well have moved the judges to sentence both of them to death—a decision that rankled, one should add, with many Allied soldiers at the time. Foulmouthed and loathsome as he was, the anti-Semitic Jew-baiter Julius Streicher, in the views of many, ought not to have been sentenced to hang. The judges came hastily to their decision about him, and it seems likely that they did so at least as much out of revulsion against his personality and the wartime crimes against the Jews (in which he played no active part) as out of reaction to his own wrongdoing. In these examples, as in others that various critics raise, an understanding of Nuremberg can only gain from a balanced historical perspective.

Nuremberg should be understood within the framework of Allied worries about the continuing threat of Nazism to Germany and to Europe—a threat embodied in the courtroom by the swaggering, sometimes brilliant presence of the former *Reichsmarschall* Hermann Göring, for many the leading personality of the Nuremberg Trial. Hundreds of thousands of Nazi-sympathizing officers, judges, police, bureaucrats, and industrialists remained part of the German scene in 1945, and in the West, at least, it was assumed that they were an inescapable part of the future Germany. Nuremberg prosecutors and judges were highly conscious of their responsibilities for the future of Germany and Europe to pronounce a stern verdict against Nazism.

Finally, Nuremberg may be seen in what I would call a cultural context—a landmark, as Sir Norman Birkett contended in his evaluation. No doubt, the trial of the major war criminals has entered into our culture, and this too prompts some historical reflection. Inevitably, with the passage of time, our views of Nazism, the Holocaust, and the Second World War are becoming more historical—freed progressively from the grip of partisanship, from a perspective overwhelmed by grief or anger. Not only inevitable, I believe, this process is worth supporting in itself. Coming to terms with these great scars in our century is one of the significant challenges of our time, and if we really believe we are capable of preventing such catastrophes in the future, we had better ensure that we have as objective an evaluation as possible of what went so wrong in the past.

In this, Nuremberg has had an important place, first, by having brought forward an extraordinarily vast body of documentation—"evidence far exceeding that previously presented to any tribunal in history," as Sir Hartley Shawcross pointed out. More than many of the organizers even hoped, Nuremberg was a voice for history—in the form of thousands of documents on the Third Reich

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assembled by the court and released for the scrutiny of historians and writers with every possible viewpoint. The prosecution, but also the defense (though to a lesser degree) used the trial to introduce evidence that has been pondered by a whole generation. It is worth stressing to an audience accustomed to demanding "full disclosure" and about to absorb a new hoard of documentation from the former Soviet Union and its allies just how unprecedented this was—and this despite the obvious limitation that disclosure did not extend to the Allied side. "There is no parallel in history," wrote one participant, "to this baring of contemporary official papers to the public eye and to expert scrutiny."

In considering the most highly charged of historical events, Nuremberg at its best moments set an example for a kind of international judgment—impartial, but not necessarily dispassionate; fair-minded, but not without moral compass; searching in its quest for truth, while recognizing the formal limitations that attend to the endeavor in an adversary proceeding. Nuremberg was not perfect, by any means, and it is possible to believe that its warts and blemishes—or even its structural faults—may be the most important aspects of it worthy of discussion today. But most would agree that there are other dimensions, too, and that some of these speak to timeless concerns that justice and fairness prevail. One thinks, for example, of IMT's president Sir Geoffrey Lawrence's calm insistence on fair play, at heated moments in the trial; of the efforts, practically for the first time outside Jewish circles, to grasp the enormity of the murder of European Jews; of the painful recognition, when hearing the case of Admiral Karl Dönitz, that Allied methods of submarine warfare had to be considered along with those of the Reich; of the underscoring, with careful legal language in the judgment of the court, of the responsibility of individuals who are issued illegal orders; and of the sincere appeals, from many quarters, including the defense, to establish some rule of law in a dangerous world of nation-states.

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Peter Arno Meets Somerset Maugham

JACOB STEIN

Maugham was dressed in gray slacks, a tweed jacket, and black moccasins, and he wore them with the upperclass Britisher's knack of making even new clothes appear faintly shabby and disreputable. Not that there was ever anything bohemian in Maugham's dress or manner. He always played the part of the reserved, well-to-do, top-drawer Englishman—a type he satirized mercilessly in his stories. Sometimes he wore a monocle.

This is the way Karl G. Pfeiffer, one of Somerset Maugham's biographers, describes Maugham's appearance during a meeting in 1941. There is another 1941 meeting between Maugham and an equally attentive observer of matters of dress and manner: Peter Arno. Maugham had agreed to write an introduction to a collection of Peter Arno's cartoons. Finding himself in New York City performing odd jobs for the British war effort, Maugham arranged the meeting. At the time Maugham is sixty-seven and Peter Arno is thirty-seven. There are differences between the two in addition to the thirty-year age difference. Maugham—quite short, homely, and shy. Peter Arno—six-foot-four, strikingly handsome, and socially in control in New York City. Photographs of Peter Arno bring to mind a taller version of the French movie actor Louis Jourdan.

Yet there are resemblances. Both Maugham and Arno satirized the well-to-do. Maugham gained entry to the circle he satirized by becoming a successful playwright and novelist. Peter Arno came through the door as a matter of right. He was the son of a well-positioned New York judge, Justice Curtis Arnoux Peters. Curtis Arnoux Peters, Jr., unilaterally declared himself to be Peter Arno. Both Maugham and Arno defied a family tradition by not pursuing a career in the law.

Maugham and Arno inspected the world around them with a perceptive and critical eye. Maugham transferred his findings into his novels where his fictional characters, drawn in the main from the life, exposed the catalogue of human frailty. Peter Arno put his findings into the cartoons published in *The New Yorker* from 1925 until a week before his death in 1968, at age sixty-four.

Maugham's short introduction begins with the draft of a mental picture he had of Peter Arno before they met. He had heard that Peter Arno was the best-dressed man in New York. Well-dressed is he, Maugham thought to himself. When Maugham was young and he had all his literary enterprises moving concentrically with the wheels of fortune, he, too, was well-dressed—as well-dressed as the London tailors could make him. He even crossed the line between the well-dressed and the foppish. Maugham had long since outgrown any desire to be remembered by such superficialities as the clothes he wore.

Maugham then turned his attention to the Peter Arno cartoons themselves, and he viewed them as a body of evidence that would reveal the inner man. Maugham's qualifications as an art critic were impressive. He had spotted the trends and he had made money buying and selling.

He identified two social types that recur in the Peter Arno cartoons. First, the large man with the bald head and the white mustache. "He has a dignified presence and the complacent authority of inherited wealth. In England he would be the colonel (retired) of a crack

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regiment, but since he is American I take him to be the president of a corporation." His closet is the home of dinner jackets, tails, and white ties. *Laissé faire* has made him world-weary. But sufficient energy remains to fuel a concupiscent look at the blue-eyed cuties. This dignified gentleman occasionally appears in the presence of his wife. She is wise to him. "For all his riches her husband stands in awe of her."

Maugham identified a second type, the small man whose face reflects bewilderment. Although he, too, has an eye for beauty, he is frustrated at every turn. "He is the romantic to whom romance is irremediably denied. He is not a bank president, he is the friend of presidents; he is not a happy man." Maugham decided that this is the real Arno, lurking behind the cartoons as the artist-observer rather than the heavy. It was in this state of mind that Maugham met Peter Arno.

Maugham was taken by surprise. He found Peter Arno well-dressed but not in the flamboyant manner—certainly not in the manner of Maugham when Sir Gerald Kelly caught him in oils in top hat, walking stick, and white gloves. In their brief meeting Maugham reports that he found Mr. Arno frank and engaging. There is no record of their having met again.

Maugham used his *Writer's Notebook* to record his impressions of the people he met, people who, by way of background and appearance, triggered his interest. Although Peter Arno does not show up in the *Writer's Notebook*, he had the elements so mixed and the striking appearance that usually attracted Maugham's restless curiosity.

Peter Arno, after graduating from Hotchkiss, went on to Yale. He was not a good student. He disappointed his father, who wanted his son to become a lawyer or a banker. The son's main interest was Tin Pan Alley popular music. He was a three-instrument man: the piano, the banjo, and the accordion. He put together a jazz band, the Yale Collegians—Rudy Vallee played the saxophone and did vocals—and in 1923 dropped out of college.

Arno took the Yale Collegians into Gilda Gray's Rendezvous Club featuring the new dance, the Shimmy. Occasionally his band played one of his own songs, "My Heart Is On My Sleeve."

Arno had no training as an artist, but he had talent. He submitted cartoons to the magazines. As he was trying to decide whether he was a bandleader or a cartoonist, he sold a cartoon to a new magazine, *The New Yorker*. *The New Yorker*'s thirty-dollar check converted the bandleader into the cartoonist. Along with what he earned as a cartoonist, he had substantial income from a family trust. This funded the life à cheval, a roulette term referring to the player who backs two numbers simultaneously. Peter Arno's second bet was café society. He wanted recognition as a playboy, a café-society man, a man of consequence in social settings of no consequence, such as the Stork Club and the El Morocco.

Lucius Beebe, the New York *Herald-Tribune*'s café-society columnist, described the requirements:

> Every one had to be able to point to some occupation, achievement, distinction, or even notorious frailty that made identification possible. The person might be a painter, a press-agent, a lover of uncommon appeal, a film actress, the president of an aviation company, the principal patron of a particular restaurant, a society photographer, a professional hostess, or a night-club promoter. The old generalities of "clubman," "millionaire," "society woman," and "internationally known figure in the world of art and politics," were no longer meaningful, valid, or acceptable.

Peter Arno's tag was "that *New Yorker* cartoonist."

The New Yorker magazine had its own night-club reporter, Lois Long. Brendan Gill recalls her as exceptionally intelligent and good-looking. She had shared a New York apartment with Kay Francis, the actress. Peter Arno and she met and married and then divorced. Their romance, their marriage, Miss Long's pregnancy, the birth of their daughter, and their estrangement were recorded in the gossip columns.

While in Reno getting a divorce from Lois Long, Peter Arno got into a fight with Cornelius Vanderbilt, Jr. Arno, it seems, was overly attentive to Mrs. Vanderbilt. The Broadway columnists treated this momentous event with the importance it required. On his return to New York he wrote a play entitled *Here Comes the Bride*, based on his marital experience. It opened, there were bad reviews, and it closed. He then worked in collaboration with Cole

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Porter on a 1930s musical, *The New Yorkers*. It ran for 168 performances and is remembered for the Cole Porter song "Take Me Back to Manhattan." Last year there was a West Coast revival of *The New Yorkers*.

Peter Arno had well-publicized love affairs with the beauties of the moment. These included Brenda Frazier, the 1938 deb of the season. The testimony of witnesses who knew Miss Frazier was that she was childish in all respects and that, apart from her manufactured celebrity and somewhat painted good looks, she was an inert substance. Gioia Diliberto, Brenda Frazier's biographer, gives a snapshot of Peter Arno during his affair with Brenda Frazier. "If Brenda was Queen of Café Society, Peter Arno in those days was king. He was tall and lean, with striking, square-jawed looks. Reporters liked to describe him as 'debonair,' a favored ideal of the time. Arno owned seventeen suits, fourteen pairs of shoes, and three dozen shirts, and was a fixture of the best-dressed lists." Madeleine Carroll, after dancing with Peter Arno, declared him as the wickedest looking man in New York.

Peter Arno and John Held, Jr., overlapped in the 1920s and 1930s at *The New Yorker*. Held was a trained artist, skilled in watercolors, a demanding medium, and in sculpture. Held's popularity peaked in the 1920s with his collegiate and flapper drawings. Corey Ford put the case for Held: "Fitzgerald christened it [the twenties] the Jazz Age, but John Held, Jr., set its style and manners. His angular and scantily clad flapper was accepted by scandalized elders as the prototype of modern youth, the symbol of our moral evolution."

Arno's take is of an older group who closed the door on the Jazz Age and ignored the Depression. They got out just before the crash. They had put on some age. They had lost their hair and gained weight. They dressed for dinner. They lived in Park Avenue duplexes. The men tottered like William Powell, and their playmates spoke like Myrna Loy. They believed in the worldly values, power and position, the pleasures of the senses, and the supreme importance of liquidity.

There was a general recognition that Peter Arno was onto something with his cartoons. By the early 1930s four popular cartoon books of his had been published. Stuart Chase gave one a favorable review in the *New York Times*. The *Art News* reported that Peter Arno was the person who "heads the field of contemporary satirists as easily as Kreisler stands at the top of the Fiddling Heap." Robert Benchley assigned credit to Peter Arno for helping to free the cartoon from the handcuffs of he-said and she-said. Arno edited his captions down to a one-liner.

Frequent Arno art showings were held, including a 1938 exhibit at Averell Harriman's wife's gallery. Lewis Mumford, reviewing the show, was taken with "Arno's skill in sweeping a simple wash across a figure to create life and vengeance." The Daumier influence was noted. The times are reflected not only in the clothes but in the posture and the facial expressions of the persons sketched in.

A number of Arno's cartoon captions became catchphrases. There was the cartoon of the plutocrats looking out a brownstone window to other plutocrats on the street below: "We're going to the Translux to hiss Roosevelt," reads the caption. There is the plane crash and the designer observing the wreckage: "And now back to the old drawing board," reads the caption. There is the man of specific intent with his desirable girlie balanced on the bar stool. The bartender looks on, and the caption reads, "Fill'er up."

The familiar night-club scene. The man looking into the eyes of the loverlee young woman. The caption: "Tell me about yourself—your struggles, your dreams, your telephone number."

The familiar dignified man in white tie, intoxicated to the point of being comatose. He is held up by a friendly policeman and a cabdriver. They present him to the doorman of a Park Avenue apartment house. The doorman, dressed like a general, says, "He's not ours. Try River House."

Dining car of a passenger train. An outraged wealthy clubman with martini glass in hand says to the conductor, "This is a hell of a way to run a railroad. You call this a dry Martini?"

As the thirties closed, Arno's career as a cartoonist was expanding despite the narrow spectrum within which he worked. Although he did not have the skill at caricature of a Ralph Barton, an Al Hirschfeld, or a Miguel Covarrubias, he had developed a following who looked to him for distinctive pictorial comment.

I recently examined the Peter Arno collec-

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tion at the Library of Congress. The chain of events that brought me to the Prints Division of the library goes back to the late 1930s. It was then that I first saw the Peter Arno cartoons in *Esquire,* a magazine I read secondhand. It was much too expensive at fifty cents, U.S.A., and three shillings, Great Britain. No one I knew had fifty cents or three shillings to spend on a magazine. The copies I saw were in the barbershop. *Esquire,* in those days, represented the erotic. It was included in barbershop literature along with the *Police Gazette* and *Film Fun.* I also recall seeing a picture in *Life* or *Look* of Peter Arno and Brenda Frazier. Thus did Peter Arno seem to represent a life of achievement. He had talent as a cartoonist, he had money, he was handsome, and he lived in New York City. What else could a man ask for?

These thoughts remained in my mind, undisturbed, for fifty years or more. I then became friendly with a man who knew Peter Arno and Lois Long. He told me of meeting Lois Long on Fifth Avenue. He spoke to her and then became aware that she had lost most of her eyesight. She recognized him mainly by his voice.

Then some months ago, I ran across the Somerset Maugham article about Peter Arno. My curiosity was revived. And here I was, on a rainy Thursday afternoon when I should have been tending to business in my office, turning over Peter Arno cartoon originals.

Each cartoon was much larger than the published version. The India ink, the wash, the five shades of gray, the highlights in opaque white deliver a tactile sense of the skill of the artist in suggesting that the drawing was an offhand burst of spontaneity. In his foreword to a collection of his cartoons published in 1951, Peter Arno tells how he brought a cartoon to life. The ideas are produced "with blood, sweat, brain-racking toil, the help of *The New Yorker* art staff, and the collaboration of keen-eyed undercover operatives. . . . Often it takes days and weeks of patient tearing apart and rebuilding of an idea before the artist is ready to start work." Once Arno had the idea, he made a sketch in charcoal. He often worked twenty-four- or thirty-six-hour sessions, straight through. He dipped a fine-pointed sable brush into the India ink. He lay in the heavy black strokes. "You move fast, with immense nervous tension, encouraging the accidentals that will add flavor to the finished drawing." He played fast and loose, laying on the washes "with careless care, so that it doesn't look like work." Once he was sure he had it, he settled back in a deep armchair and stared at it, "even though dawn is breaking in the street outside and your eyes are burning in your head with fatigue; and you gaze on it with a loving joy, and you say to yourself, with a bit of surprise, 'By golly, I made it!'"

Despite Peter Arno's success as a cartoonist, his personal life, as middle age settled in, was another matter. There were two failed marriages. He drank heavily. His playboy pals were dropping out with their own failed marriages and their drinking problems. The night club days were going out of style. Their stylishness itself began to be called into doubt. Sherman Billingsley, of the Stork Club, had been exposed by Fred Allen as a man who could not say hello without a TelePrompTer.

If Peter Arno had reflected on his playboy years, he could have drawn comfort from Maugham's *The Summing Up.* Maugham believed in the pursuit of pleasure for pleasure's sake. "The spirit is often most free when the body is satiated with pleasure; indeed, sometimes the stars shine more brightly seen from the gutter than from the hilltop. The keenest pleasure to which the body is susceptible is that of sexual congress. I have known men who gave up their whole lives to this; they are grown old now, but I have noticed, not without surprise, that they look upon them as well spent."

I spent two years practicing law with a friend who was a part-time lawyer and a full-time explorer of womanhood. He often said that love was better the second time around—and much more expensive. A new wealthy client did not give him the excitement a new romance did. He was threatened by jealous husbands and by bill collectors, but he thought them a reasonable price to pay for what he had enjoyed and suffered. How did it all end? He lost his law practice, his family, and most friends. But he never regretted, as he put it, "the great work he had done."

Most who write recollections of the early *New Yorker* magazine days give Peter Arno only a mention and they are neutral on character testimony. There is an occasional comment that he had his dark side. He chose not to become a member of the Algonquin Round

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Table. He didn't look for friendships among *New Yorker* regulars. One of the few times Peter Arno attended a *New Yorker* party is described in E. B. White's 1952 letter to James Thurber. He notes that Peter Arno played the piano.

We wrapped the party up at 4:45, but it had a couple of hours of early morning enchantment—the kind of goings on that made you feel that the door would presently open and in would walk Scott and Zelda. Arno, much to my surprise, came early and went the whole route. He drank gin and ginger ale, and did not get drunk.

Brendan Gill attended the same party. He describes it in his book *Here at The New Yorker.*

Among those present was Arno, who had taken the precaution to bring along his own large shakerful of dry martinis. The year was 1952, so Arno must have been forty-eight; to me in my thirties he seemed much older than that, and it may have been the case that my impression was correct and that he was indeed prematurely aged; certainly when he died, in 1968, at the age of sixty-four, he was already an old man. One thought then, sadly, oh, but what an extraordinary young man he must have been! And probably he thought that, too, in the increasing misery and loneliness of his last years.

Peter Arno's art, an art of the moment, turns out to have the golden quality, endurance. It is a personal snapshot, in black and white, of a corner of the 1930s. It has the same charm as Eddie Cantor's *Makin' Whoopee* 78 rpm record. It is a corner where the obligatory artifacts are Fred and Ginger, and Nick and Nora. Cole is playing "You're the Top" and adding this new fifty-sixth couplet:

You're the top
You're a sketch by Arno
You're the top
You're his Grand Piarno
Underneath the keys, it's your knees
that start to knock
You're a Palm Beach Party
You're a New York Smarty
You're Baby Doc!
You're the top
You're Kentucky Bourbon
You're the top
You're Deanna's Durbin
I'm a poor imitation, of Mr. P's creation
A flop!
But if Baby I'm the bottom,
You're the top!

Add to the exhibit Peter Arno's former vocalist, Rudy Vallee, in his shawl collar tux and Cartier cuff links, singing, in upper-class accents, "Brother Can You Spare a Dime." And, of course, a poster-sized copy of Arno's Roosevelt cartoon.

Peter Arno's last years were reclusive. He left New York City and took up residence in Harrison, New York. His only connection with his Manhattan days was by telephone to *The New Yorker* magazine's art director. Arno's last cartoon appeared in *The New Yorker* within a week of his death in 1968. Charles Saxon described it this way. "It was a picture of a nymph reclining in the forest who says to a fawn prancing by, 'why don't you grow up?' It was Arno at his blithe best, and a beautiful drawing."

In September 1980, the Cartoon Museum, located in Port Chester, New York, devoted a special exhibit to Peter Arno. There will be other exhibits, and with the passage of time the people who appear in the cartoons may well become as interesting as Daumier's witnesses, lawyers, and judges, human still life of a bygone time.

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October

SHARON HASHIMOTO

Inside the house, on the other side of a picture-
window, the man I know as my father
stands with hands pressed against the glass, looking
out over the yard, through white arms of birch empty
of leaves. His breath clouds what was clear
and I wonder which words his lips may have framed,

which memories might escape the frame
of his body. He's a stranger in a picture;
an invisible pane separates him from me. The clear
outline of this man seems fixed into place. But my father
doesn't see me outside. The autumn light feels empty
of warmth. The blue sky wears a look

of going away. How far back must I look
to find what I'm missing; why absence frames
my life? Into the sky, a chimney empties
a smoky black ribbon. Then I remember how the picture
on a bedroom wall is all that remains of his father,
how one day that began so practiced and clear

changed. In sepia tones, my grandfather becomes clearly
defined—his sky and hair the color of earth. Looking
into his eyes, he could be my reflection. Fatherless,
when do we know who we are? Beyond the frame
and glass, I want him to step out of his picture,
fill his son with himself the way a river empties

itself into the sea. My breath leaves an empty
sound in a hollow stem. Dandelion seeds fly clear

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and free on the wind. More than a picture,
the man in the window is who he is, like a looking
glass which only shows what it sees. The past frames
my life with each generation. Father,

you are what you have of your father—
what I have of you. Within a camera, the empty
shell of a man stood upside down on the exposed frames
of film. I watch the small circles of sunlight clear
the irises of my eyes. Did my grandfather know who to look
for as he slowly became the picture?

I picture my father's hand wiping his breath
from the window. Through an empty frame,
we look for a moment, clear to each other.

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Roundabout

—for my father,
James Spence (1922–1993)

MICHAEL SPENCE

Our plan was not to have a plan: we'd fly
To Australia—for you, the land of World War II—
And see whatever came our way. The sky
Below the equator shimmered hot and blue,
As though we'd crossed the date line into summer.
At Melbourne Airport, we rented a car,
Deciding I would drive, then walked around
To the wrong sides. You shook your head and grinned:
Looks like someone moved the steering wheel.
The driver by default, as you pulled out
You barely missed a shuttle van. Our hotel
Lay just a few miles off by map. We hit
The freeway right at rush hour, the lorries
Screaming by us. I felt the blasts of wind seize
Our car and shake it, as if the the trucks frightened
The air away from them. At last we found
The exit into town. My eyes on the map,
I wasn't watching when the roundabout
Sucked us in. I thought of a whirlpool that traps
A small boat. *Which road will lead us out?*
You asked, dodging other drivers as we looped
And looped the tarmac ring. But the signs whipped
By too quick for me to read. Then the swirl
Of cars parted briefly; you zagged through a snarl
Of horns, finding the spoke that let us escape.
Afraid, I had you drive the first two days,
Asking how you kept it straight. *I keep*
My body near the centerline—that way
My turns will end up right. Now you've taken
An exit I can't see, while I go on
Circling the same place until the land
Spins, and the map crumples in my hands.

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MEMOIR

Donald Davie

1922–1995

ALAN JACOBS

In the summer of 1994 I found myself on a train heading west across England toward the city of Exeter. From there I would travel to a village set among low green hills to visit Donald Davie. As I rode, I thumbed through a paperback copy of *The Tempest,* which I was scheduled to teach the next day; and since Donald had said not long before that he would write no more poetry, my eyes were naturally drawn to Prospero's famous repudiation of his magical arts, a speech long taken to refer to Shakespeare's plans to retire from *his* poetry.

> But this rough magic
> I here abjure; and when I have requir'd
> Some heavenly music (which even now I do)
> To work mine end upon their senses that
> This airy charm is for, I'll break my staff,
> Bury it certain fathoms in the earth,
> And deeper than did ever plummet sound
> I'll drown my book.

As I turned to watch Swindon pass dully by my window, it occurred to me that my implicit comparison of Donald and Prospero was a singularly inapt one. No one would have been quicker than Donald to repudiate any attempt to make poetry into a form of magic. In this, as in most things of import, his career from its inception was of one piece.

I did not know Donald nearly as well as I would have liked. He came to my school, a dozen years ago now, to deliver a lecture on the chief theme of his later critical career, the poetic excellence of the eighteenth-century hymnists: Cowper, Smart, and especially Watts. (Later he would tell me that Watts "has been for many years now in many respects my hero.") He stood at the lectern, a solidly built man of middle height and firm (not to say forbidding) countenance. He was sixty-two then: his dark hair was streaked with gray, chiefly at the temples, and he was developing the jowls of the older man. These developments helped to make him look puckish at times—perhaps they softened the primness I think I see around his mouth when I look at earlier pictures. He rarely looked at his audience as he spoke, but occasionally peered at us over the spectacles that had slid down his nose, as though merely to confirm our continued presence.

Donald found it necessary to illustrate his lecture by ample, if well-chosen, selections from the relevant poems and, as a result, considerably overran his time limit. This is scarcely uncommon at an academic lecture, but the next-scheduled occupants of the room were less than patient, and one of them interrupted Donald in mid-sentence. He eyes lifted from his text and, under his formidable brows with their Vaughan Williams eyebrows, fixed the intruder with a scornful look that, after a moment, metamorphosed into a sardonic smile. As he tucked his notes under his arm and marched out of the room, a resourceful person grabbed a folding chair and suggested that Donald take a seat under a nearby oak tree—it was a lovely autumn day—to complete his lecture. Only when he realized that this would enable him to light his pipe (in the lecture hall smoking had been prohibited) did Donald accept this offer, and as twenty or thirty people arranged themselves on the grass around him, like the eager pupils of Socrates, what had been a conventional lecture became a charmingly digressive monologue. Donald sat with legs crossed, a length

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of white English calf showing between trouser cuff and sock, and gestured with his pipe in the mottled shade of the oak. He was starting to enjoy himself.

It was while he was in this mood that I met him. As we walked across campus talking about poetry, I wondered if he would be receptive to a continuation of our conversation, if only by letter. He was, though only intermittently until he retired from Vanderbilt University and returned full-time to the Devonshire village where for many years he had spent his summers. Our correspondence then increased dramatically: "Here, in my retirement," he wrote, "I'm particularly dependent on letters from my friends." This isolation was intensified by the increasing unreliability of his legs—he was beginning to take the occasional but frightening fall—but also by what he called his "physical indolence": "I take retirement seriously, in a way that puzzles others, including my wife. I mean that I seldom find reasons for leaving this village." So I had to come to Donald if I wished to see him; and that, in the summer of 1994, is what I was finally able to do.

As I rode toward Exeter I asked myself whether it was not presumptuous of me to visit. Donald had been encouraging, but I knew that the differences in our cultures and our ages (he was thirty-five years my senior) limited our relationship in important ways. Still, there was a bond. We were both Christians and lovers of poetry—categories that do not often overlap; both moralists by temperament and practice; perhaps most important of all, people from similarly marginal regions of our native countries. He was a Baptist-turned-Anglican from northern industrial England, I a Baptist-turned-Anglican from Alabama. He had lived in the American South long enough (while teaching at Vanderbilt) to appreciate the ways in which it was like the world in which he was reared.

But even these links don't bear much emphasis: to be a Baptist in Alabama is a very different thing than to be a Baptist in England; and the Alabama Baptist who joins the Anglican communion sends a very different cultural message than the Yorkshire Baptist who joins the Anglican communion. As for the time Donald spent in Tennessee, he described himself as only a "bemused but attracted Southerner-by-courtesy." Above all I had no access to his deep and persistent sense of being a Northerner (the North being for Donald "the region of the stripped and the straitened, the necessitous")—and a Northerner from a country whose center of gravity is notably low. This feeling of detachment from what conventional wisdom deems the heart of things was dear to him, in his retirement as in his childhood.

Donald was ever the contrarian. He was far more likely, when referring to his religious upbringing, to call himself a Dissenter than a Baptist—though this may have been, in part, a concession to the Anglican establishment's lack of interest in the varieties of Dissent. And contrarian from an early age: not just because he was "Chapel" rather than "Church"—in northern England that was scarcely uncommon—but also because his family always voted Tory, "though without hope," in a Labour stronghold. At Cambridge he was "happy" to join the Robert Hall Society (for Cambridge's Baptists), even though his attachment to his Baptist roots had become tenuous, not to say indiscernible. He seems to have become comfortable in the Anglican tradition only in places where it was *not* the established communion: this first happened during his years teaching at Trinity College, Dublin, where "the disestablished Church of Ireland satisfied the need, bred in me as a child, to envisage my church as in tension with the state." Later, when he had moved to California to teach at Stanford—after the most frustrating time of his academic life, a period in the early sixties when he sought with limited success to establish an academically rigorous English curriculum at the new University of Essex—Donald found an Episcopalian priest whom he described as his "mentor," a word he used elsewhere only in reference to his greatest critical influences, the Englishman F. R. Leavis and the American Yvor Winters. (If this priest was as cantankerous as, in their different ways, Leavis and Winters could be, he must have had an unusual conception of pastoral duty.)

This contrarian temperament can be seen equally clearly in Donald's poetry and his criticism. In a time when the most influential British poets posited a Romantic or an Augustan aesthetic (see Dylan Thomas and W. H. Auden, respectively), Donald sought out the poets of the late eighteenth century and claimed them as his masters. It was the poets in between,

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Cowper and Goldsmith and (a rather later figure) Crabbe, whom he most admired. Later on, as I have noted, he would become the champion of Isaac Watts and fill his poems with echoes of Watts's hymns. Donald's poetry is analytical and dry, knotty, concerned with geography and history in ways one might expect more from an essayist. (One of Donald's longest poems concerns the English sailor James Trevenen, who shared with Crabbe the patronage of Edmund Burke. Who else would have devoted five hundred lines to such a figure?) He early named his poetic gift a "winter talent" and would return much later to that self-descriptive image. His criticism, on the other hand, is never disinterested, but rather heated—passionate and moralizing.

It is utterly characteristic of Donald that, in his first book of criticism, one of the key terms he employs to describe verse of which he approves is "chastity." Once, when I asked him why he had written so little on Auden, whom I thought would be a very sympathetic figure for him, he agreed that, though he admired Auden enormously, he had had little to say about him, because, as he put it, "I never thought Auden needed any help from me." Since judicious assessment revealed that Auden's reputation was neither inflated nor deflated, Donald chose to devote his critical energies to figures who he thought had been neglected (the aforementioned hymnists) or misunderstood (Ezra Pound). Auden needed no critical knight to come to his rescue.

If the analytical tension of Donald's verse brought it to the verge of essayistic reflection and criticism, the sheer and unapologetic partisanship of his criticism brought *it* to the verge of poetry. And, indeed, when in 1992 Donald looked back at his early writings, he reflected on just this point: "The critic . . . has to be—so it is assumed—clinical, detached, Olympian. . . . [But] the young man who wrote these essays was the same who, in poems of the same time, was wrestling the actualities of Plymouth and Dublin into a significance that satisfied him. For him then, as for me now rereading him, essay and poem were equivalent and almost interchangeable attempts to grapple with the one same reality." But this grappling often seemed, at least, to be more intense in Donald's criticism. To the end of his life, Donald seemed to be aroused to the greatest passion by arguments over even the smallest detail of criticism or historical scholarship. A memorable instance for me is his acrimonious dispute, conducted with another scholar in the correspondence pages of the *London Review of Books*, about the identity of the man wearing blood-covered garments in the sixty-third chapter of Isaiah.

Donald's long-term fascination with Pound—about whom he wrote a monograph and a substantial book of essays—is a wonderful illustration of his dissenting spirit, because there is no figure in modern poetry with whom one would expect Donald to be less sympathetic. After all, Donald's life-long devotion to traditional poetic forms, his tendency to confine himself to shorter poems, and his general conservatism and traditionalism, would seem to bear little affinity with the rebellious and flamboyant American who sought to "break the pentameter." I suspect that Donald would have had little patience with any British poet who tried to write like Pound. But Donald believed that the idioms in which Pound worked were often appropriate not only for a poet of Pound's nationality but also for one of his historical situation—usually appropriate, but not always: "I have as often been exasperated by Pound as exalted and delighted by him." But this exasperation was not necessarily something to lament: "A love affair comprehends exasperation along with exaltation." In passages such as this, one sees that Donald's contrarian temperament was no mere curmudgeonliness, but it arose from a sense of gratitude to gadflies such as Pound, who are among the more socially useful animals. And Pound may have been no more distant from his culture's center than Donald was from his.

Donald's concern with Pound is but part of his larger and still more longstanding interest in American culture: starting with the lengthy "Sequence for Francis Parkman" in 1961 and continuing through the last section in his *Collected Poems*, "Goodbye to the USA," Donald would return again and again to reflection upon the people, the history, and the geography of North America. A noteworthy theme in his work is the Englishman abroad, especially on this continent; among his longest individual poems are extended treatments of the English sailors and navigators James Trevenen and George Vancouver.

But though Donald relished the gadfly's vo-

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cation, he understood perfectly well that (like all vocations) it carries accompanying spiritual dangers. One of the poems from his troubled Essex period, "Revulsion," is a severe self-analysis in which the jeremiad—which Donald admitted was the literary genre that he most naturally assumed—verges on lament:

> My strongest feeling all
> My life has been,
> I recognize, revulsion
> From the obscene;
> That more than anything
> My life-consuming passion.
>
> That so much more reaction
> Than action should have swayed
> My life and rhymes
> Must be the heaviest charge
> That can be brought against
> Me, or my times.

Those last three words alter the balance of the poem in interesting ways: from self-critique emerges at least the possibility of cultural critique. (Who's to blame for the failures of this new university?) A less ambiguous self-indictment comes a decade later in "St. Paul's Revisited," which is the second part of "Depravity: Two Sermons" (a title stolen from Auden). Here Donald teases out some of the subtle discriminations to be made among terms that for most people are synonyms: Anger, Ire, Rancour. And this poem I understand the better because of another notable and notably anti-Prosperan trait of Donald's, his willingness to explain his poems to the honestly confused.

I had made the mistake of telling Donald that he was often a difficult poet, and compounded this error with the still grosser one of comparing him in this respect to Geoffrey Hill. Now, my recollection is that I meant to contrast the *difficulty* of Donald's poetry with the *obscurity* of Hill's, but Donald failed to admire that distinction as I had hoped he would, and indeed became indignant at the very thought of being linked with Geoffrey Hill (in this respect anyway). "I will not accept that my poetry is as difficult as Geoffrey Hill's!" Donald wrote to me, refuting an imaginary claim, and then continued:

> Regarding the second of my "Depravity: Two Sermons," the word "Revisited" in my title "St Paul's Revisited" is meant I'm afraid to refer back to my "Under St Paul's" [a poem from his second collection, *A Winter Talent*, from 1957]. In that earlier poem I tend to identify with "gulls," taken to stand for Anger, confronted with London's depravity. Twenty years later I find that response too self-comforting: not only is Anger (Ire) itself a sin, but I convict myself of not Anger but Rancour (not the white gull but the multicoloured hoopoe); and depravity is located not in the "out there" (contemporary London) but in the head (or the heart) of the too easily indignant patriot. I take the point that you don't want this or any poem to be exhaustively explainable: I give you only what I consciously put there—there's a penumbra of other meanings that are doubtless there, beyond my intentions. But I'd feel ashamed if I couldn't, when challenged, come up with that much of an explanation. I guess that Hill couldn't, or wouldn't. Accordingly, when or if you care to face me with other "difficulties," I'd be glad to oblige.

The quotation marks around *difficulties* in the last sentence is a characteristic touch, a nip at the ankle of the overbold stranger who is no doubt already making tracks. But more important is Donald's insistence that he would be "ashamed" if he "couldn't, or wouldn't" offer precisely the sort of explanatory gloss on his verse that not only Hill but most contemporary poets would consider it near heresy to provide. As if he would take any opportunity to puncture the Prosperan view of poetry as inexplicable magic.

In many cases Donald didn't even wait to be asked for an explanation. Fairly early in our correspondence he expressed his pleasure at my having noted that his last book of poems, *To Scorch or Freeze*, which is filled with paraphrases of or responses to the Psalms, is in the dithyrambic tradition whose greatest modern practitioner (as Donald himself argued) is Czeslaw Milosz. And having thanked me, he went on:

> Because you have been so kind towards *To Scorch or Freeze*, I think I will show off a little. Take my poem, "Except the Lord Build the House." This title plainly signposts the reader to Psalm 127 in the King James version. . . . However, "Short be your sleep and coarse your fare" is a straight steal from Watts's version of this Psalm; and "No use of early rising; / as useless is thy watching" comes from the Elizabethan Sidney Psalter. Lines 6 through 8 come from another psalm (122, v.3), and later lines draw on yet another, Psalm 129,

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as rendered admirably by Watts. Moreover the same verses, as rendered by the Calvinist Arthur Golding in 1571, give me "no one / going by in the road calls out / 'Good morning' or 'Good luck.'" Thus [Mikhail] Bakhtin's plurality of voices is built into these poems to a degree that no one will, or is expected to, notice. Add that "Eblis" comes from Pound (Canto 27 and elsewhere), and it will appear how far I am from "the traditional monologue of the lyrist."

(If putting quotation marks around *difficulties* in the previously cited letter was a neat example of Daviean acerbity, here the parenthetical "or is expected to" marks an equally common kindness.) Whatever Donald may have said of the isolation of his little Devonshire village, in letters like this I hear a poet surrounded by the voices of fellow poets, finding with them a fellowship composed equally of the love of verse and a deep attachment to the Christian faith.

Donald rarely wrote directly about his spiritual life. In this he followed, as he was quick to say, the British rather than the American fashion. But I believe his faith became more important to him as he grew older. One sees this not only in the way he chose to end his poetic career, with the psalmic variations of *To Scorch or Freeze*, but also in his celebration of Watts and in his last major critical and editorial projects: a book on the eighteenth-century congregational hymn, an anthology of translations of the Psalms. It sometimes seemed, in the last years of Donald's life, that his faith had become a kind of balm to his combativeness, especially since so many of the causes he fought for lost ground quite steadily despite the eloquence of his support. (Again the Essex experience comes to mind.) Once, in what he called "a rather arid letter," he expressed frustration at how quickly even the best and most cogent critical work could be forgotten, thanks to the academy's lust for sheer novelty. In such a climate, he said, he scarcely lacked "things to say," but couldn't "envisage circumstances in which saying them would have much point." In such a mood he took comfort in his sense of God as what Mikhail Bakhtin would call the "superaddressee" of his work: "We can tell God in our prayers that what we write is meant to His Glory; that is the one and only justification that we have."

At times Donald considered the possibility that his lapsing into silence could be an intellectual version of the "physical indolence" of which he was quick to plead guilty. In a late poem he reflects on a poetic "dry season" and notes with mild surprise, first, that "the nice distinction / Of colon from semi-colon / That once absorbed" him now bores him, and, second, that he doesn't mind his own loss of interest.

> Sloth; why is it always
> Spoken of so ill?
>
> It does no harm; it spares
> The inattentive world
> One more triumphant play
> Out of my one strong suit,
> Sardonic paradox:
> This age's mask for love.

I was glad that Donald could summon such comfort; but it seemed to be rather cold, or "arid," comfort, and uneasily I considered one of the poems in *To Scorch or Freeze*, "Inditing a Good Matter." This poem cites the beginning of Psalm 45, "My heart is inditing a good matter," but in another tense: "My heart had been inditing / a good matter." Now, the poet admits,

> I find nothing to say,
> I am heavy as lead.
> I take small satisfaction
> In anything I have said. . . .
>
> [God] shrugs. How can He care
> what *billets-doux* we send Him,
> how much we applaud? Such coxcombs
> inclined to commend Him!

Given the strength—and not just for Donald—of this darker, if equally biblical and traditional, valuation of Christian writing, I was rather trepidatious when, a few months later, I paid the visit that I referred to at the beginning of this essay. And of course my train-bound reflections on Prospero's abjuration didn't help, however firmly (and rightly) did I deem them inappropriate.

But the Donald that I found that day was vigorous and talkative, anything but arid. He was grayer and heavier than he had been ten years before, but otherwise much the same: the same ironic look from under the brows, the same use of the pipe—whether smoking,

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filling, or tapping it—for conversational punctuation. There were anecdotes about his fellow critics and poets, revelations of new scholarly discoveries, a repeated if fruitless search for recordings of some favorite hymns. After having announced to me that he could no longer ambulate without his cane, he left it leaning against something half-a-dozen times and had to retrace his steps to find it. At one point he dug through a pile of magazines to find the issues of the *London Review of Books* in which his row about Isaiah's blood-covered man had been conducted, and read his side of the exchange to me with the oratorical verve of a Dylan Thomas and a good deal of unsuccessfully suppressed laughter. When he and his wife, Doreen, dropped me at the Exeter railway station that evening, Doreen whispered to me that the visit had done Donald good. But I think it did me much more good. As the train took me back toward Oxford, I sat looking through a pile of books Donald had given me—those of his books I did not already have—and considered the example of intellectual courage and integrity they represented. I did not see him again.

For Donald the writing of poetry, like the writing of criticism, wasn't magic; like Auden he loathed Shelley's claim that "poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world." No, it was a way of engaging an old and rich conversation. For the real lover of conversation, of course, argument—even when it crosses the borderline into the territory of polemic, or jeremiad; even when it risks Ire and Rancour—is the supreme spice. Donald believed that the value of discussion depends upon its heatedness upon the importance of the subject. He cared about poetry, about criticism, about Isaiah's blood-covered man, because he believed that the decisions one makes about such matters determine—in small or in large part, one can never be sure—the value of mortal life. For Donald, and this distinguishes him from many contemporary proponents of "dialogue," conversation was never an end in itself; it mattered only insofar as it dispelled darkness, or encouraged virtue. This conviction is sufficient to earn Donald Davie our attention, and after that our gratitude.

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REAPPRAISAL

By O'Hara Besotted

(For Charles Mish)

MORRIS FREEDMAN

I began reading John O'Hara as an undergraduate, in the late 1930s, for pleasure alone, haphazardly, separate from the primarily dutiful and organized reading I did for university courses. I read him on the sly in company with other popular writers, among them Raymond Chandler, Graham Greene, John Dickson Carr, Aldous Huxley, Somerset Maugham, Georges Simenon, none of whom I had to "know" and talk or write reports and keep notes about. O'Hara fitted in with earlier furtive reading of what I knew was thought of as less than high art.

These writers provided an immediate appeal to a young, inexperienced, avid reader: the pull of absorbing plot; idealized and exotic characters; fascinating occupations and situations; engrossing exchanges; atmospheres of distant times and places; and some plausibility, my sensitivity to which inevitably became more hardened with aging. When lost in these readings, I happily dulled disbelief and suspended critical judgment.

I felt especially self-indulgent in my undisciplined delight in O'Hara, whose world was simultaneously so unattainably glamorous and yet so near. His speakeasies and jazz clubs were a nickel subway ride away. In the years dedicated to getting diplomas, O'Hara's works were tempting morsels. My private satisfaction perhaps was similar to that of early enthusiasts of movies or secret admirers of Norman Rockwell's *Saturday Evening Post* covers. When Dwight Macdonald demolished the cult of James Gould Cozzens in his spectacular *Commentary* essay, "By Cozzens Possessed," occasioned by the excited reaction to Cozzens's *By Love Possessed* (1957), I felt shame for enjoying O'Hara, Cozzens, and Company, who all thrived in the same scorned territory of vulgar fame.

I found O'Hara mostly in *The New Yorker*, sometimes in *Esquire* and the *Saturday Evening Post*, and on remainder counters and in used-book stores. I noted that he had achieved his first reputation for his stories and that it was the novels that generated a certain downgrading. I read several of them (including *Butterfield 8*, *A Rage to Live*, and *Ten North Frederick*) during the 1950s, when his stories weren't running in *The New Yorker*, and I remember I was surprised to find that they had something of the epical force and density of the writing of such prodigious figures as Balzac, Dickens, and Dreiser, and also something of their sloppiness.

What is so appealing about an O'Hara story or novel? He spins a good yarn smoothly. His style is unobtrusive, even flat—what is sometimes called transparent. He rarely uses metaphors and commonly uses monosyllabic words. The writing is as comfortable, as inviting, as the intimate, fluent talk of articulate and attentive old friends, involved and at ease with one another. It is free of affectation, of quotable bits. His dialogue has the fidelity and quirkiness of tape recording. O'Hara prided himself on his perceptive ear to the point of vanity. He was a master of vignettes. Consider how much we glean about the man and woman in the following fragment:

". . . I also notice you're wearing your Phi Beta Kappa key. I never knew you were one."

"I was wearing the key the first night I danced with you," I said.

"Maybe you were, but I didn't know what it

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was. I never knew what it was till my brother made it. But you must have stopped wearing it."

"Vests are coming back," I said.

"That's not why you're wearing it. You're running for judge. Don't try to fool me, Phil."

As a sometime reporter and editor, O'Hara knew the kinds of events and their details that command the attention of daily readers, that make headlines and feature stories. O'Hara's raw material has the coarseness and universal appeal of gossip, efficiently processed to be free of irrelevancies, pointless ugliness and repetition, penetrating characterization, specious sentimentality. Matter that turns melodramatic and nonsensical in the hands of, say, Judith Krantz or Sidney Sheldon remains convincingly tragic and moving in O'Hara through the truthfulness and precision of his writing.

O'Hara's fiction seamlessly interweaves documentary care with fictional virtuosity. We learn as much about the specific operations of an automobile franchise in a small town as about the owner's qualities as a man and husband, and about the place of the business in the social and political structure of the community. When we meet a rising lawyer, we learn about the intricacies of his practice and his private life. The opening and closing paragraphs of "Imagine Kissing Pete," a novella, suggest O'Hara's skill in blending panoramic social scope with dramatic compactness:

To those who knew the bride and groom, the marriage of Bobbie Hammersmith and Pete McCrea was the surprise of the year. As late as April of '29 Bobbie was still engaged to a fellow who lived in Greenwich, Connecticut, and she had told friends that the wedding would take place in September. But the engagement was broken and in a matter of weeks the invitations went out for her June wedding to Pete. One of the most frequently uttered comments was that Bobbie was not giving herself much opportunity to change her mind again. The comment was doubly cruel, since it carried the implication that if she gave herself time to think, Pete McCrea would not be her ideal choice. It was not only that she was marrying Pete on the rebound; she seemed to be going out of her way to find someone who was so unlike her other beaus that the contrast was unavoidable. And it was. . . .

In 1960, then, I saw Pete and Bobbie again. They invited me, of all their old friends, to go with them to the Princeton commencement. Angus McCrea, Junior, led his class, was awarded the mathematics prize, the physics prize, the Eubank Prize for scholarship, and some other honors that I am sure are listed in the program. I could not read the program because I was crying most of the time. Pete would lean forward in his chair, listening to the things that were being said about his son, but in an attitude that would have been more suitable to a man who was listening to a pronouncement of a sentence. Bobbie sat erect and smiling, but every once in a while I could hear her whisper, "Oh, God. Oh, God."

There, I guess, is our happy ending.

Over my decades of reading O'Hara, in prolonged or quick sessions, including the present, I have found myself at some point deeply moved. O'Hara disarms me, makes me lose my cool. His tales can come vividly to life and be as gripping, as disquieting, as case histories recorded by gifted clinicians. I empathize with his people, I am concerned about their fates. O'Hara enriched dry neutral specifics with color, shadowing, mystery. My earliest enthusiasm for him may have been owing to callowness but still today, when I am a sated, crusty, persnickety veteran who's made his way through every kind of writing, O'Hara gives me chills.

One problem with liking O'Hara, certainly for many serious readers, is that it takes so little work to get him. We were taught to find literature hard. O'Hara speaks to us at once. He is immediately accessible. This is one ground for the charge that he was finally trivial and superficial, that he didn't sufficiently weigh—or weight—his material. Yet he was never just an uninvolved, unartful recorder, which he has been described as being, like a video camera, a disciple of the Goncourts. He exercised an exquisite selectivity in moving through his terrain. Gore Vidal, in the opening of a *New York Review of Books* essay, charged O'Hara with not making enough of the "details" he meticulously amassed. Yet he went on to say how much he was affected exactly by the bareness of one narrative. Less can become more in many ways.

"More than anyone now writing," Trilling wrote of O'Hara's short stories in an early tribute,

O'Hara understands the complex, contradictory, asymmetrical society in which we live. He has the most precise knowledge of the content of our

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subtlest snobberies, of our points of social honor and idiosyncrasies of personal prestige. He knows, and persuades us to believe, that life's deepest emotions may be expressed by the angle at which a hat is worn, the pattern of a neck-tie, the size of a monogram, the pitch of a voice, the turn of a phrase of slang, a gesture of courtesy and the way it is received. . . . For him customs and manners are morals.

O'Hara was more than an alchemist who turned customs and manners into morals as end product. He was a moralist from the start in his selection of customs and manners to anatomize. He was virtually a puritan in taking life seriously and in requiring us to take seriously his seriousness. Through his maneuvering of character and event, and his accompanying commentary, he made us share his values. We champion his characters who survive adversity through strength and decency, reject those who fall through self-indulgence or plain nastiness, and feel a wrenching sympathy with those felled by forces utterly outside their awareness or control.

Reading O'Hara can be discomfiting. He holds persons responsible for their deeds while never judging anyone simplistically or without compassion. Good and evil have infinite and elusive coloration in O'Hara. Arrogant, selfish actresses turn out to be genuinely civilized, generous, hardworking, in need of common sympathy and friendship; cocky teenagers can be ultimately justified for us in their abrasive toughness. We recognize as fellows his most irritating creations. In the tight course of a single work, as in "Imagine Kissing Pete," O'Hara has us repeatedly adjust our feelings about Pete as he metamorphoses stolidly from detestable to sympathetic. O'Hara knew that it may take a lifetime to shape up.

We get caught up in O'Hara because of his scrupulous dissection of motives and rationalizations we ourselves incline to slight or blur. Sanity, hard work, decency, superlative competence are not always pure and do not triumph without difficulty or compromise over pathology, selfishness, nastiness, stupidity, thoughtlessness, klutziness. O'Hara makes us alert to lapses and recoveries, to hues of black and white. His confident and delicate sorting of life's trickiest variables obliges us to concentrate, and to glory with him, at last, when goodness is recognized. Like all good writing, O'Hara's leaves us satisfied.

I assumed that the cloud over O'Hara's reputation was cast by his extensive popularity.* During the years in which I was clandestinely reading him, it seemed *The New Yorker* was publishing him every week before his estrangement from it; his novels were listed regularly on bestseller lists and were just as regularly turned into movies. His essays ran in mass-circulation magazines; his picture appeared in the daily papers. His stories kept being reissued, in hardback and paperback. O'Hara's audience ranged widely, somewhat maddeningly for those who categorize readers, from *Saturday Evening Post* to *New Yorker* regulars, from those who read indiscriminately to those who considered themselves connoisseurs.

For all the prestige that O'Hara's frequent appearances in *The New Yorker*'s pages carried, it was perhaps the notice by Lionel Trilling in the *New York Times Book Review* of O'Hara's *Pipe Night* (1945), from which I quoted above, that sparked a more elevated and academically correct attitude toward his work. *The New Yorker* itself could, paradoxically, confer a vague stigma on contributors because of its haughty perfectionism. In 1956, The Modern Library issued an edition of thirty-two of O'Hara's stories, placing him in company with the great writers of the past and with such esteemed contemporary ones as Hemingway, Fitzgerald, and Faulkner. Trilling wrote the introduction.

O'Hara on his own made his presence prominent in academic and literary circles, somewhat ambiguously to be sure, when, in 1950, he began a negative review in the *New York Times Book Review,* of Hemingway's *Across the River and into the Trees,* with the following sentence: "The most important author living today, the outstanding author since the death of Shakespeare, has brought out a new novel."

The venue and defiant extravagance of this pronouncement made it difficult for the university and critical establishments after that quite to ignore him. I recall the reflexively contemptuous comment of academic col-

* I owe a number of biographical details in my essay to Finis Farr's biography of O'Hara (Little, Brown, 1973) and to Matthew Bruccoli's biography, *The O'Hara Concern* (Random House, 1975), and to his volume of O'Hara's selected letters (Random House, 1978).

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leagues that O'Hara's coupling of Hemingway with Shakespeare was as jejune as his fiction. The review made more perceptive readers aware of O'Hara's astute critical instincts. He was no lonely primitive working away at his fiction without a strong and just consciousness of the work of peers and of their standings. He recognized both Hemingway's greatness and his faults. His low opinion of this Hemingway book was consistent with that of academically established critics.

O'Hara had finally achieved respectability. I went out of my way, without shame, to read *Lovey Childs*, a short novel published in 1969, the year before his death. I remember it rather disappointed me in its overall thinness and especially in its uncharacteristically strained depiction of exotic sexual activity and use of off-color vocabulary, both then coming into mode. An essential mark of O'Hara's braggadocio had been his defiance of faddishness. He had previously never hesitated to allude plainly to pertinent physical business without invoking Partridge or Krafft-Ebing.

Appointment in Samarra (1934), his first and comparatively short novel, had earlier struck me as not being as diamond-like as the best stories or as energetic as the large novels. The reading of his five plays, too, left me cold. I expected that his genius for dialogue would enrich them, and I concluded that *Pal Joey* (1940), his libretto for the famous musical based on his short stories, depended for its special success finally on production and performances. The plays obviously could not carry the astute essayistic commentary one finds in the stories and novels on character and event and on the nature of writing, all so essential to his power as a master of prose fiction.

While reading O'Hara more systematically, I remained an unreconstructed devotee. On his worst days, O'Hara could content me with his professional prowess, and I became happy to declare my admiration for him at campus gatherings. I placed him with other fertile writers I valued, who, if they had not created so much that was imperfect, might not have created so much that was splendid.

The consensus today is that O'Hara's midlength works, the novellas, represent him most favorably and characteristically. I think the minimalist short stories may do that since they compel an uninterrupted, concentrated reading, making it awkward to be diverted by shortcomings. The Modern Library, in a handsome new issue, has gathered seven novellas that, I think, fairly represent his work, high peaks and faint shallows (*The Novellas of John O'Hara*, Random House, $19). O'Hara thought of his novellas as thinned-down novels, but he got into them much of the variousness and depth of the larger form.

The haunting "Natica Jackson" covers the unlikely but fulfilling affair between a management engineer, a good Roman Catholic, and a famed film star. When the engineer's wife surmises that her husband must be involved outside the family, she takes a motorboat out on a large body of water with her two children, urges them to jump in for a swim, and leaves them to drown. We get a foreboding dread of the wife's madness through the slow, cumulative particulars of her repetitive normal behavior. O'Hara covers the lavish yet limiting environment of a screen star, able to fulfill grand whims but unable to do so comfortably in public, and the happily mundane one of an intelligent, disciplined, honorable middle-class professional.

"The Girl on the Baggage Truck" also convincingly portrays a star, another attractive woman, in her working habitat, but it left me feeling slightly uncomfortable. It seemed finally either a needful fantasy or a needless boast: the narrator, a projection of O'Hara, is rewarded for his thoughtfulness toward the star with an invitation to her bed. "Andrea" spans the career of a beautiful, winning woman who goes through life satisfying every inclination, frequently without any delight, whose shocking, abrupt end is unexpected yet characteristic. "The Skeletons," a very funny, almost slapstick piece, unusual for O'Hara, depicts a deeply dysfunctional, defiantly conventional family, which suddenly falls apart.

The collection includes two works of the sort detractors cite to illustrate O'Hara's penchant for the trivial and sensational. They yield more than enough O'Hara gold, however. "Ninety Minutes Away," which has a pleasing throwaway quality, describes the intense, transient, asexual intimacy that develops between a young, cocky reporter and an even younger, defiant, teenage nymphomaniac. In "A Few Trips and Some Poetry," the final, somewhat Faulknerian tale in the collection, an older, rich eccentric, at a clumsy din-

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ner party he has assembled, whispers something into the ear of an attractive young woman, capturing her deep attention. They later marry, though she continues a reckless sexual partnership with the narrator. After the husband dies, she settles down with a young woman in an openly lesbian ménage.

The typical O'Hara hero is independent, defiant of authority, impressively competent in anything he does, proud of his professionalism, appreciative of expertise in others, loyal to friends and family, faithful servant of beautiful but reticent women, heterosexually vigorous, a stoic in defeat and disappointment, a man who naturally befriends other men, noble in manner when sober and when his drinking is measured, ill-tempered when it is not, and a hard drinker whatever his job. He is likely to be Irish and a lapsed Catholic, a mix of lace-curtain (O'Hara's father was a well-to-do physician) and shanty (O'Hara, with his bulbous nose, puffy face, and aggressive chin, looked like a cartoon longshoreman). That hero despises lesser men who do not rise to his ideal. In the earlier writing, O'Hara is contemptuous of homo- and bisexuals ("double-gaited," O'Hara called the latter); in the later writing, we find greater tolerance of lesbians and bisexuals of both sexes, especially if they are also heterosexually outstanding.

The typical O'Hara heroine is, first, beautiful and quick-witted if not fashionably educated; comfortably conscious of her beauty; sexually extravagant with the right man—that is, a bona fide O'Hara hero—but not necessarily promiscuous; detached; remote; a good mother when there are children; a devoted, endlessly patient, unconditionally forgiving wife or lover. O'Hara and his good men carry themselves as equals with their women and fiercely protect them; the bad men are conventionally beastly.

O'Hara covered a broader, less exceptional array of men and women than Hemingway, Fitgerald, and Cheever, with whom he has been grouped. Even in their bluster and extravagance, O'Hara's characters are less theatrical than Hemingway's or Fitgerald's. O'Hara concentrated on the day-to-day, ethnically precise, class-determined aspects of personality and character, avoiding stereotyping and facile summation. He made a point of revising first impressions. "It is always a pleasure to discover that someone you like," O'Hara writes about one character, "and have underestimated on the side of simplicity turns out to be intricate and therefore worthy of your original interest."

Hemingway dismissed O'Hara's negative review of *Across the River and into the Trees* on the ground that O'Hara didn't know the kind of people Hemingway knew. Hemingway was right, of course, in thus separating himself—and Fitzgerald and Cheever—from O'Hara. I suspect Hemingway thought that he knew a better class of people than O'Hara did. An anecdote has Hemingway, in company with two other writers, suggesting that they use some of their extra funds to send O'Hara to Yale. O'Hara was uncomfortable about not having gone to college and apparently talked excessively about Yale. (When he heard the story, O'Hara was reported to have said, "It was the first time I knew Hemingway had any real envy of me.")

In spite of finding themselves over and over again in challenging and extravagant situations, O'Hara's people are in substance unspectacular. They are often of working-class origin. That iconic universality which marks so many of Hemingway's and Shakespeare's characters, O'Hara's lack. O'Hara wrote mainly of types who swell a scene, who live at their finest and most definitively at moments only in commonplace settings, who rise to valor, or plunge to destruction, in little worlds. In this respect, he is like Cheever, though Cheever concentrated on middle-class persons and their middle-class troubles. John Updike, who respects O'Hara and has followed his manner of cataloguing the worldly possessions of characters to define them, reaches for mythical import.

Like other great localists, O'Hara remained one of the natives whose activities he examined. O'Hara's Gibbsville, Pennsylvania, his name for Pottsville, his birthplace, where much of his fiction is set and where many of his characters come from, belongs in the atlas with Balzac's Paris, Dickens's London, Joyce's Dublin, Anderson's Winesburg, Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha, Edgar Lee Masters's cemetery, Cheever's Westchester, Singer's *shtetlach.*

O'Hara's life was of a piece with that of many of his characters. He worshipped the Gershwins, whose works were favorites of the singers and performers in the saloons O'Hara's

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men and women frequented. For all his masculine vanities and combative dealings with editors, O'Hara did not carry frivolous grudges or cultivate insecurities. He was generous in acknowledging support. He nurtured his ambition and successes shrewdly, though he often overreached. He was so angered by the dismissive review of *A Rage to Live*, by Brendan Gill, one of *The New Yorker*'s senior editors, as to allow it to contribute to his extended break with the magazine in the fifties. *The New Yorker* seemed ambivalent about O'Hara's stature as a writer. It published his shorter works frequently, most of the time to lead off an issue, and paid him handsomely, yet Harold Ross, its chief editor, and Gill never did see his novels as all that outstanding.

Nevertheless, O'Hara continued to respect *The New Yorker*'s editors and their pedigrees to the extremes of deference and awe. He named his Gibbsville after Wolcott Gibbs, for example, its longtime drama critic. He resented any hint of downgrading or patronizing and was ready to assault unappreciative reviewers he ran into in bars. His adversarial, even pugnacious, posture toward editors and publishers, of course, has always been a common attitude of writers. But his natural good humor, generosity, and sensible professionalism generally prevailed.

He was patiently wary with his main publisher, Bennett Cerf, for example, and charmingly expressed his friendship with him. For one of Cerf's birthdays, he prepared the following ditty:

> In Eighteen Hundred Ninety-eight
> (The twenty-fifth of May, the date)
> There came upon this mundane sphere
> A little lad, so sweet, so dear,
> That all alive were moved to say,
> "Ah, what a happy, happy day!"
> A week went by, he had his *bris*,
> And ever since it's all been bliss.
> So birthday greetings to our boy.
> Sincerely, John O'Hara, goy.

O'Hara had as determined a command of his craft as, say, did Joyce, whose *Dubliners* he knew. He read Lord Byron, Saki, and other masters of comic and satiric forms. His altogether solemn dedication to his writing repeatedly comes up in his letters and in the introductions to his collections. He spoke about his "business" in life being to leave a full and accurate record of the time in which he lived. He had a high estimate of his place in world literature, believing that he should properly have been in contention for a Nobel Prize. He decided his chances were finally dissipated when Steinbeck, "another" American, got the prize. He harbored no bitterness toward those he regarded as fair competitors. But he resented authors and their publishers who he felt engaged in immoderate self-promotion and literary politicking, more eager to garner prizes than to produce results. He cherished the honors that did come to him, not least those bestowed by Yale.

He thought of himself with the same amiable affection he displayed toward his readers, whom he considered as partners in his enterprise as writer. "I had a wonderful experience at Trenton," he wrote one time to his daughter. "I waited on the platform, in case you did not take that train. Right in front of me there was a Pullman car, and I happened to notice that an austere woman was reading *Sermons and Soda-Water* (the three-volume edition). I knocked on the window, and she was understandably confused until I pantomimed 'book' with my hands and pointed to myself. She got it, got all excited, and spoke to her husband in the chair adjoining hers. He was delighted, recognizing me right away, and so did a woman who was in the other neighboring chair. Then the people in the other chairs, overhearing the excitement, all laughed and waved at me. So I clasped my hands like a prizefighter and took off my hat and bowed. I'm sure I'll get a letter from my reader on the other side of the Pullman windows. It was fun."

O'Hara has been dead a quarter century. As with other writers whose work lingers in our minds, we wonder about his intrinsic merit. We revive their work, in part, I suppose, to check our standards but, more, in the hope of regaining former pleasures.

This latest sampling from the O'Hara treasure, together with the memories it summons up, should gratifyingly assure those who used to read him, whether faithfully or hesitantly, that he belongs with the best of writers. Those who have not known him at all now have a superb chance for a rewarding first meeting.

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Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee

WALTER L. ARNSTEIN

The year was 1897 and the date was June 22, and by general consensus it was one of the most remarkable occasions of a remarkable century. Mark Twain, the American ironist, was at his most unironic as he sat in his chair on one of numerous wooden stands erected along the Strand in order to watch the parade of the era as it wound its six-mile way through London. On foot, on horseback, and by carriage, the participants went first from Buckingham Palace to St. Paul's Cathedral. Later, after a stop at the Mansion House, the home of the Lord Mayor of London, they crossed the Thames, traversed the poor residential district of Southwark, recrossed the river on Westminster Bridge, and passed the Houses of Parliament before returning to Buckingham Palace.

Mark Twain took note of the elaborately decorated streets, of the well-dressed and well-behaved spectators at every window and on every balcony, and of the tightly packed sidewalks patrolled by red-coated soldiers. Captain Oswald Ames, the tallest soldier in the British army, led what seemed to be an unending procession of troops—white, yellow, brown, and black—from Australia and the Far East, from India and Africa, from Canada and the West Indies. "For varied and beautiful uniforms and unceasing surprises in the way of new and unexpected splendors, it much surpassed any pageant that I have ever seen." The purpose of this procession was to celebrate the survival on the throne for over sixty years of the little old lady, by now half-blind, who reigned over the largest empire the world had ever known and had done so for a longer time than any of her predecessors or any of her European counterparts.

In his account of this event, Mark Twain may have set aside his spirit of irony, but—looking back on the occasion one hundred years later—we may identify and investigate at least four ironies: (1) the fortuitous turn of events by which the notion of "jubilee" became attached to the British monarchy; (2) the reasons why Queen Victoria privately resisted and resented the public ceremonies for which her reign and those of her twentieth-century descendants are best remembered; (3) the accidental manner in which the Diamond Jubilee became a celebration of empire; (4) the way in which the Victorian era—oft recalled today as one of relative peace, stability, and complacency—was looked back on by observers such as Mark Twain as the most dramatically eventful epoch of change experienced by a single generation in all of human history.

The word *jubilee* as used in modern English proves on examination to be a curious linguistic hybrid, an amalgam of Hebrew and Latin. The Hebrew word *yobhel* stood for the ram's horn trumpet that, after every forty-nine years (seven multiplied by seven), would, according to the Book of Leviticus, announce a time of emancipation and restoration. Fields were to be left uncultivated; Hebrew slaves were to be set free; lands and houses in the open country or in unwalled towns that had been sold were to revert to their former owners or their heirs. According to Bible commentators, evidence is lacking as to what degree such injunctions were ever observed in ancient Israel,

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but, during the American Civil War, General Sherman's soldiers inspired the following words:

> Hurrah! Hurrah! we bring the Jubilee!
> Hurrah! Hurrah! the flag that makes you free!
> So sang the chorus from Atlanta to the sea,
> While we were marching through Georgia.

It was in this sense of the word that African-Americans in the 1860s celebrated their emancipation from slavery as their "Year of Jubilee" and composed their own jubilee songs.

At the same time, the Latin word *jubilum* meant a wild cry or shout. *Jubilare* meant to cheer loudly in a fashion not unknown today in Big Ten stadiums on autumn Saturday afternoons when the home team has scored a touchdown. During the Christian era, the elements of emancipation and celebration became amalgamated, and the person who during the Middle Ages gave a new lease on life to the concept of a jubilee as both emancipation and celebration was Pope Boniface VIII. He decreed the year 1300 to be a jubilee year during which sinful Christians might obtain a remission of the punishment that awaited them in the world to come if they would but undertake a pilgrimage to Rome in order, while there, to visit holy churches, give alms, and undergo a period of fasting. At first the church decreed a one-hundred-year interval between jubilee years, but later popes reduced that number to fifty, then to thirty-three, then to twenty-five.

The historical association of the word *jubilee* with the papacy is far older than its association with the British monarchy. Both King Henry III in the thirteenth century and King Edward III in the fourteenth century managed to last on the throne for fifty years or more, but neither ever celebrated a jubilee. The first usage of the phrase in a fashion that anticipates Queen Victoria's came in 1809 when some of the subjects of King George III celebrated his jubilee. In the old biblical sense, they marked the completion of forty-nine years and the onset of the fiftieth year since his accession to the throne back in 1760. In his later years, King George III became the subject of greater adulation and of a more immediate identification with popular patriotism in Great Britain than the descendants of those Americans who rebelled against his rule have been wont to remember. Thus, in the words of one contemporary rhymester:

> A People happy, great and free;
> That people with one common voice,
> From Thames to Ganges' common shores
> rejoice,
> In universal Jubilee.

Events marking the jubilee of 1809 took place all over the kingdom and even in the West Indies and in Bombay. A suggestion was indeed made that King George III be granted a new title, "Emperor of the British and Sovereign of the Ocean," but the war against Napoleon was not at that time going well enough to justify the adoption of such a proposal. In 1809 the king participated in no great procession through his war-beleaguered capital. The monarch was unwell and almost blind, and little more than a year later he was to be afflicted for the fourth time by the disease that on each previous occasion had led to temporary insanity. George III survived physically for nine years more, but this time his mind did not recover.

George III's immediate successors did not reign long enough to be able to celebrate any momentous anniversaries. In the twentieth century, both King George V and Queen Elizabeth II were to celebrate Silver Jubilees on the twenty-fifth anniversaries of their succession to the throne, but in June 1862 Queen Victoria took no such notice of the twenty-fifth anniversary of her accession. At that time, her husband Prince Albert had been dead for scarcely half a year, and her mood was one not of jubilation but of deepest mourning. The celebration of the fiftieth and the sixtieth anniversaries of Queen Victoria's accession to the throne, therefore, were to constitute less a link with an ancient tradition than an essentially novel phenomenon.

The English Constitution, written in 1867 by the Victorian journalist and man of letters, Walter Bagehot, familiarized Britons with the notion that "a republic has insinuated itself beneath the folds of a Monarchy." Britain's queen, Bagehot argued, no longer led the armies of the realm in person nor did she preside over its councils of state. She remained important less because of the "effi-

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cient" functions that she still exercised than because of her "dignified" functions—those that "excite and preserve the reverence of the population." The monarch as symbol of obedience, as herald of morality and religion, as head of society, as emblem of governmental continuity while the true political rulers of the country changed—those were the "dignified" functions that Bagehot emphasized. They included the ceremonial, "the outward show of life . . . in which the attention of the nation is concentrated on one person doing interesting actions." The only difficulty with Bagehot's assessment is that, though numerous educated Victorians read his work and found his conclusions persuasive, Queen Victoria was not among them.

In the years of her widowhood, she conscientiously perused innumerable files of state papers, signed thousands upon thousands of army commissions, and talked to or corresponded with her prime ministers about scores of political, clerical, and diplomatic appointments. When a foreign policy imbroglio threatened, she was ever ready to ply those prime ministers with letters and telegrams of advice, often couched in the imperative mood. At the same time, scarcely a single ceremonial occasion took place, whether it be the annual opening of Parliament or the dedication of a new bridge or the inauguration of a new town hall, that Victoria did not grouse about beforehand, assuming that she agreed to participate at all.

In a private letter of 1866 to her prime minister, she likened the State Opening of Parliament to a public execution. She failed to understand, she told Earl Russell, why the public should be so "*unreasonable* and unfeeling . . . as to long to witness the spectacle of a poor, broken-hearted widow, nervous and shrinking, dragged in *deep mourning*, ALONE *in* STATE as a Show . . . to be gazed at, without delicacy of feeling, is a thing *she cannot* understand, and she never could wish her bitterest foe exposed to!" As the queen asked rhetorically in 1871: "What killed her beloved Husband?" The answer was "Overwork and worry! . . . and the Queen, a woman, no longer young is . . . to be driven and abused till her nerves and health give way with this worry and agitation and interference in her private life." Not only did she tend to equate ceremonial occasions with "interference in her private life," but, in a letter of 1872, she also dismissed such public ceremonials as a form of "ostentatious pomp" that was "utterly incompatible" with and "quite unsuitable to the present day."

Queen Victoria did agree early in 1887 that it would be proper to mark the completion of her jubilee year, the fiftieth anniversary of her accession to the throne, with an appropriate ceremony of thanksgiving in Westminster Abbey, a building that she had not entered since her coronation forty-nine years earlier. She also agreed to open the state dining room in Buckingham Palace for the first time since Albert's death more than twenty-five years earlier. Because she considered herself, even in 1887, to be in a position of semi-mourning, she refused point-blank, however, to go "in state"—to wear the robes of purple velvet and the ceremonial crown and to carry the sceptre and the orb. When jubilee plans were first announced, one London paper complained that the occasion "promises to be a very shabby and tenth-rate affair," and another expressed analogous unhappiness with the prospect of a jubilee procession that was "utterly inadequate, mean, pinched, and narrow, and [that] appears to be dictated by a parsimonious spirit unworthy of a rich and powerful state."

In the meantime, Victoria bombarded her prime minister, Lord Salisbury, with one objection after another. She instructed her private secretary to inform her ministers that "she will not be teazed & bullied ab[ou]t the Jubilee . . . w[hich] seems to be considered only for the people and their convenience & amusement while the Queen is to do the public and newspaper bidding. She will do *nothing* if this goes on." The queen vetoed point-blank her prime minister's suggestion that the jubilee parade be timed for Monday, June 20, thereby providing Londoners with a three-day weekend; it would be, Salisbury noted, "a very convenient holiday for all working men. . . ." In her later years, she liked to live at Osborne on the Isle of Wight and at Balmoral in the Scottish Highlands and, to a lesser degree, at Windsor Castle some fifty miles to the west of London, but she studiously avoided her nation's capital and, on this occasion also, she had no desire to spend an extra day there.

What then did the Golden Jubilee of 1887 mean to the queen? It meant less a public celebration than a private anniversary. And

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why, unlike her grandfather, did she prefer to celebrate it on the fiftieth rather than on the forty-ninth anniversary of her accession? Circumstantial evidence suggests that she did so because in part she visualized the occasion as the golden wedding anniversary that fate had denied her. In early-nineteenth-century Germany, unlike Britain, it had indeed become the custom to refer to the fiftieth wedding anniversary as a golden jubilee. When she first referred to the onset of her jubilee year, she was upset "at the thought of those no longer with me, who would have been so pleased and happy, in particular my beloved husband, to whom I owe everything. . . ."

A Te Deum composed by Prince Albert was central to the Westminster Abbey jubilee service. And when a group of women wanted to present the queen with a jubilee gift, the only idea she could come up with was yet another statue of Prince Albert. The organizer candidly told the queen's secretary that if that purpose were publicly mentioned before the funds had been collected, then "we have no more chance of obtaining the money for it, than of getting the moon out of the sky." Eventually, the Women's Jubilee Offering was to involve almost £90,000—perhaps nine million 1997 dollars. It also involved a congratulatory address to which almost three million female contributors affixed their signatures. Of the total amount, £10,000 was indeed used to erect a new equestrian statue of Prince Albert on the Windsor Castle lawn. Another £4,000 was used, at Victoria's request, to purchase for her a jeweled brooch. The remainder went to the Queen Victoria Jubilee Institute for Nurses, a brand-new organization designed to aid poor sick people in their own homes. Although the queen took far less interest in the Institute named after her than she did in the statue or the jewel, she did instruct her private secretary to make sure that a few men were added to the Institute organizing committee. "A group of women," she observed, "is most useless."

The queen's most immediate jubilee concern was with the horde of relations who seemed intent on crossing the English Channel in her honor. "Altogether the Queen is appalled at the prospect of these endless visitors," she told her private secretary. Her son and heir might delight at the presence of "such a mob of royalties," but "she owns she knows not how she ever can live through it all." Ultimately she not only endured them, but she also filled ten state carriages with them, each pulled by six cream-colored horses, carriages that preceded her own in the two-mile jubilee procession. Grudgingly she also served them breakfast in Buckingham Palace, a decision for which her prime minister thanked her in so fulsome a manner that one might have imagined that she had cooked the bacon and eggs in person.

All manner of other activities were added to the jubilee calendar, and English manufacturers freely used Victoria's pictures to advertise perfumes, soaps, pills, cocoa, and fabrics. On sale in London were walking sticks featuring the queen's head as a knob, teapots in the shape of the queen's head with the lid shaped like a crown, and automatic musical jubilee bustles that played "God Save the Queen" whenever the wearer sat down. Ultimately Victoria survived all the festivities without undue difficulty, and she publicly thanked her people for "the wonderful and so universal enthusiasm displayed by . . . high and low, rich and poor, on this remarkable occasion." The queen even attended a party that had brought thirty thousand school children into Hyde Park. When a great colored balloon labeled Victoria sailed aloft, one little girl was heard to remark: "Look! There's Queen Victoria going to Heaven!"

That assessment proved premature, because ten years later there was to be another jubilee, one to which the queen acceded only after three conditions had been met: that state ceremonial not be used, that she not be compelled to get out of her carriage on Jubilee Day, and that the entire occasion not involve a single penny from her Privy Purse. But what ought this sixtieth anniversary of her accession be called? The fiftieth had been a "Jubilee"; let the sixtieth be the "Jubilissimee," so went one suggestion. There was no precedent for calling a sixtieth anniversary of any kind a jubilee. As Sir Matthew Ridley, the scholarly home secretary, observed, "'Jubilee' has got its meaning from the old Jewish law & is certainly inseparably connected with a notion of 50 years. 'Diamond' is understood to mark the completion of 60 years of married life. . . ." Her new private secretary felt certain that "Diamond" was a title that "Your Majesty would not approve of." To the contrary, the

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queen was much taken with the title because, one suspects, it served as the substitute for that truly momentous wedding anniversary that she and Albert might have celebrated had he not died young.

A majority of historians of the later twentieth century have found it natural to look on the monarchy as the obvious human symbol of the strands that tied together the heterogeneous nineteenth-century British Empire. They have also defined the Diamond Jubilee as constituting first and foremost a celebration of the late-Victorian British Empire at its zenith—before the bright sparkle was tarnished by the anguish of the Anglo-Boer War of 1899–1902. Such a linkage would certainly appear to make sense. In our own day, at a time when the British Empire of old has come to resemble the smile on the face of the Cheshire cat in Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Queen Elizabeth II remains the head of the Commonwealth, the Queen of Canada and Australia and New Zealand and of a score of other states as well as of the United Kingdom. Yet when, in the 1860s, Walter Bagehot itemized the "efficient" and the "dignified" responsibilities of a British monarch, it never occurred to him to include "linchpin of the empire" among them.

Queen Victoria helped alter that state of affairs by resolving in 1876 that she be formally proclaimed Empress of India. Back in 1858, after the Sepoy Mutiny, she had, after all, insisted on rewriting the proclamation to the Indian people that her ministers had drafted on her behalf. It was to include the words: "We disclaim alike the right & the desire to impose our [religious] convictions on any of our subjects . . . but all shall alike enjoy the equal & impartial protection of the law." She was ever conscious of the fact that she presided over a multiracial empire, and in 1874 she went out of her way to praise an Anglican bishop in Africa for "his noble, disinterested conduct in favour of the natives who were so unjustly used, and [expresses] in general her very strong feeling (and she has few stronger) that the natives and coloured races should be treated with every kindness and affection, as brothers, not—as alas! Englishmen too often do—as totally different beings to ourselves, fit only to be crushed and shot down! . . . *All* her Colonial Governors should *know* her feelings on this *subject* of the *native races*." In her later years the queen chose an Indian Moslem to be her personal servant and, in one big ledger book after another, she practiced the elements of the Hindustani language.

Yet the empire had not held center stage during the Golden Jubilee celebrations of 1887. It was primarily members of the royal families of Europe who rode on horseback and who filled those horse-drawn carriages: the kings of Greece and Denmark and Belgium and Saxony, and the Crown Prince of the German Empire, and many more. The situation ten years later was to be quite different. The queen at age seventy-eight was not prepared to take on again the task of feeding and housing a yet larger coterie of European crowned relations. She recommended therefore a ban on all reigning monarchs; such a ban would make it unnecessary for her to entertain the most obnoxious and irritating of the lot, her eldest grandson, Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany.

Many members of the cabinet were upset at this royal refusal to invite or to welcome Continental rulers to her Diamond Jubilee, but grudgingly they gave way, and the prospective celebratory vacuum inspired the new colonial secretary, Joseph Chamberlain, to transform the Diamond Jubilee into a true celebration of empire. As he pointed out to Prime Minister Salisbury, "There has never been in English territory any representation of the Empire as a whole, and the Colonies especially have, hitherto, taken little part in any ceremony of the kind." All eleven prime ministers of the empire's self-governing colonies were therefore invited along with representative military escorts. And so contingents from Canada and New Zealand and the several Australian colonies—along with Indian army troops and detachments from Malta and Trinidad and Natal and other dependencies—all became part in 1897 of the grand parade observed by Mark Twain. And Joseph Chamberlain found occasion to preside over the first conference that enabled all of the prime ministers of the self-governing states within the British Empire to talk to one another, setting yet another precedent for the twentieth-century Commonwealth.

Much of the empire was not as yet self-governing, of course, but we must remind ourselves that its expansion had become, for

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many late Victorians, not an embarrassment requiring apology but an accomplishment meriting tremendous pride. As the historian William Edward Hartpole Lecky had observed in 1893:

> Remember what India had been for countless ages before the establishment of British rule. Think of its endless wars of race and creed, its savage oppressions, its fierce anarchies, its barbarous customs, and then consider what it is to have established for so many years over the vast space from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin a reign of perfect peace; to have conferred upon more than 250 millions of the human race perfect religious freedom, perfect security of life, liberty, and property; to have planted in the midst of these teeming multitudes a strong central government, enlightened by the best knowledge of Western Europe, and steadily occupied in preventing famine, alleviating disease, extirpating savage customs, multiplying the agencies of civilisation and progress. . . . Whatever misfortunes, whatever humiliations, the future may reserve to us, they cannot deprive England of the glory of having created this mighty empire.

Lecky's words of 1893 would hardly suffice as our final verdict on that subject today, but they do help us to make sense of our third irony: how the public celebration that for Queen Victoria may well have constituted, first and foremost, a substitute for the sixtieth wedding anniversary that fate had denied her, how that very celebration could fortuitously be transformed into a glorification of Britain's worldwide empire.

For many people today the word *Victorian* continues to carry a connotation of prudery and sexual repression; it was an age that unquestionably preceded the onset of "the permissive society." A second connotation may well be that of stability: it was an age when furniture was solid, when houses were built to last, and when God was more obviously in His heaven than has been the case in our century. A third connotation may well be that of international stability and of relative peace. It is certainly appropriate to note that, although during Victoria's reign Britons fought two medium-sized wars and a great many frontier skirmishes in Asia and Africa, they and their Continental neighbors successfully avoided world wars. In contrast to the revolutionary twentieth century, the Victorian era at first glance possesses an aura of stability and continuity of institutions and values and social structure; after all, the same monarch presided over that era for almost sixty-four years.

Not only would many historians of our own day find such an assumption of stability and continuity misleading, but so would—and did—contemporaries who looked back on their own age, as did Mark Twain in the year 1897. "British history is two thousand years old," he noted, "and yet in a good many ways the world has moved further ahead since the Queen was born than it moved in all the rest of the two thousand years put together." There were, first of all, the innumerable inventions that made the later 1890s so different from the 1810s: the railroad and the steamship, the telegraph and the telephone, the electric light, the sewing machine, and the camera. "She has seen more things invented than any other monarch that ever lived."

Some of these material inventions, Mark Twain conceded, may have added complexity as well as comfort to life, but there had been enormous "moral advancement" as well. Two hundred crimes once subject to capital punishment had been swept from England's statute book. "She has seen English liberty greatly broadened—the governing and law-making powers, formerly the possession of the few," had been "extended to the body of the people." That "public educator," the modern newspaper, had been created "and its teachings placed within the reach of the leanest purse." She had seen the "world's literature set free" by means of the institution of international copyright. She had seen the invention of anesthetics "for all time banish the terrors of the surgeon's knife," and she had herself pioneered the use of such a balm in childbirth. In the cities of civilized lands, she had seen medical science and improved sanitation cut the death rate in half.

Queen Victoria had also, Twain noted, "seen woman freed from the oppression of many burdensome and unjust laws; colleges established for her . . . ; in some regions rights accorded to her which lift her near to political equality with man, and a hundred bread-winning occupations found for her where hardly one existed before—among them medicine, the law, and professional nursing." The queen had also seen "the right to organize trade unions extended to the workman," and she

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had witnessed a reduction of working hours from twelve or fourteen hours a day to eight—"a reform which has made labor a means of extending life instead of a means of committing salaried suicide." In the course of her life, she had witnessed a quintupling in the number of people in the world who spoke the English language. Whereas her predecessor, Queen Elizabeth, had ruled a land of less than one hundred thousand square miles with fewer than five million people, Queen Victoria's "estate covers a fourth part of the habitable area of the globe, and her subjects number about 400,000,000."

A significant number of those subjects rode by in the jubilee parade: innumerable troops of soldiers; splendidly attired Indian princes, colonial premiers. There were a few Continental princes such as Rupert of Bavaria, the Stuart heir to the English throne, who on this occasion came as a peaceful guest. There were innumerable foreign ambassadors and members of Britain's extended royal family.

> The excitement was growing now [Twain went on]; interest was rising towards the boiling point. Finally a landau driven by eight cream-colored horses, most lavishly upholstered in gold stuffs, with postilions and no drivers . . . came bowling along, followed by the Prince of Wales [the future King Edward VII], and all the world rose to its feet and uncovered.
>
> The Queen Empress was come. She was received with great enthusiasm. It was realizable that she was the procession herself; that all the rest of it was mere embroidery; that in her the public saw the British Empire itself. She was a symbol, an allegory of England's grandeur and the might of the British name. . . . The procession stood for sixty years of progress and accumulation, moral, material and political.

At the entrance to St. Paul's, the queen's carriage halted for an open-air religious service. A Te Deum was followed by the Lord's Prayer and then by specially composed prayers and hymns led by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London. Although one of Victoria's cousins was shocked by the monarch's decision to "thank God in the Street!!!" London's *Daily Mail* described the service differently. The Mother of the Empire, the paper reported, had come to do homage to the One Being "MORE MAJESTIC THAN SHE."

The Diamond Jubilee did not involve a hallowed historic tradition; it was rather a festival that had to be especially invented for the occasion. Victoria was a monarch who resisted the very ceremonies that seemed to others central to her position. (At the end of the memorable twenty-second of June, admittedly, even the queen had to concede in her private diary that it had proved "a never-to-be-forgotten day. . . . The crowds were quite indescribable, and their enthusiasm truly marvellous and deeply touching.") An event chiefly remembered as a celebration of empire became one primarily because the queen did not care to be awash in a sea of Continental royal relations. The Diamond Jubilee looked back on a presumed age of stability that was seen by contemporaries such as Mark Twain as a time of revolutionary change.

Although she delighted in many of the century's technological marvels, especially the railroad and the photograph, Queen Victoria may not impress us as the most appropriate symbol for such dynamism. Yet, beset as she was in the years after the 1897 jubilee by increasing blindness, she continued to take a strong interest in the world around her, including the traumatic Boer War that broke out in 1899. In the spring of 1900, she insisted on making a state visit to Dublin to thank the Irish people for having provided so many of the soldiers in her army, the soldiers who were by then defeating the enemy in South Africa. In one sense, her last four decades had been years of perpetual mourning, of looking back nostalgically to her life with the devoted consort whom she had lost so many years before. And yet, when the relations gathered about her deathbed on January 22, 1901, the last complete sentences that they were able to make out were these: "I don't want to die yet. There are several things I want to arrange."

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Leon Edel

The Life of a Biographer

LYALL H. POWERS

From the beginning, Leon Edel's life has been that of the outsider, of the alien unsure of his identity, deprived of his roots, lacking a place distinctively his own. He is a first-generation American, first child of Russian-Jewish immigrants who came to the United States in the earliest years of the twentieth century. Simon Edel and Fannie Malamud were married in Pittsburgh, where Simon worked as a tailor. Joseph Leon was born in that city on September 9, 1907. He scarcely had time to realize the joy of being an only child, for his brother, Abraham, was born in December of the following year; Leon's domain was severely diminished. In 1910, Simon moved his family to the prairies of Saskatchewan to set up as a storekeeper in the little town of Jansen. Life in Saskatchewan, the long frozen winters heavy with snow and racked with blizzards, and the lean cultural fare of the town drove Fannie to gather up her two sons in 1912 and brave the journey back to her parents' home in Rovno, Russia. Leon was then four; Abe not quite three. The visit lasted thirteen months; signs of the approach of the First World War were unmistakable and made return to Canada the wise option. Furthermore, Leon was ready to begin formal schooling.

The family moved to Yorkton, Saskatchewan, in 1914. The Edels remained there for ten years; Leon thus had some sense of permanent settlement during his school years. He attended Victoria public school and then Yorkton Collegiate Institute. Yorkton was then a prairie town of between four and five thousand inhabitants. It is about fifty miles north of the United States border and forty miles west of the border of Manitoba. The Edels lived in a two-story frame house, the usual huge woodstove (with its reservoir to provide hot water) in the kitchen and coal-burning stoves elsewhere in the house for warmth in the winter. The town had no library, so Simon would bring home books after his business trips to Winnipeg, some 450 miles away. Fannie supplemented the cultural offerings by seeing to it that Leon learned to play the violin.

The Edels first lived in a kind of ghetto with other Jewish families on Betts Avenue, informally called "Jewstreet." Yorkton was predominantly Protestant, though not aggressively anti-Semitic, yet Leon was acutely aware of being an outsider. The town and surrounding area, however, numbered many others who were outsiders as well—Czechs, Doukhobors, Germans, Mennonites, and Ukrainians. The other side of the coin of alienism, was evidently cosmopolitanism. The new Canadians uniformly harked back to their former life "overseas." The atmosphere of Leon's childhood was rife with nostalgia and elegies to lost homelands, a sense of exile and disinheritance; yet it was leavened with recognition of the freedom and opportunity afforded by the adopted Canadian home. The Sunday gathering of intellectuals at the Edel house sounded the theme of lost cultural advantages—a theme emphasized for Leon by his mother's feeling of entrapment and deprivation.

The sense of alienation that he felt thus flourished in his own house. His mother, he recalls, was "a woman of passionate intensities"; but the passion tended to be cerebral, and "there was something cold in the way she

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touched me and embraced me." He remembers his father, on the other hand, as "all warmth and affection," yet as something of a dreamer and incurable optimist. An observer might well have wondered whether the bright youngster would take the easy, passive way, accept his role as an outsider, and draw as little attention to himself as possible; or whether he would perhaps become the active, assertive master of his own fate, spurn those who would threaten to further his alienation, and bravely lay claim to his own chosen territory. Or would he do each in turn? Years later Edel himself commented on Thoreau's claiming to have lost a hound, a bay horse, and a turtle dove:

> He named the three elements missing in his life: the faithfulness of the dog, that is affection; the strength and virility of the horse, in other words his sexuality; and the dove, the symbol of peace and the Holy Ghost that is love. ("The Art of Biography," *Paris Review*, Winter 1985, p. 192)

That may also have been some reminiscence of Leon's own early years.

In 1923 the Edels moved to Montreal so that Leon could enroll at McGill University and enjoy the rich resources of the university library, the guidance of Harvard-trained professors such as George W. Latham and Harold Files, and the conversation of new acquaintances. His particular affiliation was with a "literary crowd" of students that counted among its number several young men whose names are now fixed in the annals of Canadian literature. They represented not only artistic creativity but cosmopolitan sophistication as well. The poet F. R. Scott of Quebec City had just returned at age twenty-five from Oxford, where he had been a Rhodes Scholar; A. J. M. Smith, another poet and just twenty-two, had been back to his parents' old home in England at the end of World War I; two others, a year younger than Leon, were also poets—A. M. Klein, born in a Jewish community in Russian Poland, and John Glassco from a well-to-do Anglo-Saxon section of Montreal. The group founded the *Fortnightly Review* during Leon's sophomore year (he was managing editor), and it flourished until his graduation in 1927. This collection of literary young men came to be known as "The Montreal Group."

Leon's interests as an English concentrator were contemporary British and European writers, especially novelists who experimented with the means of expressing psychological response to alienation—James Joyce, Dorothy Richardson, Virginia Woolf. He received his B.A. degree in the spring of 1927, but understandably decided to prolong his stay to prepare an M.A. thesis on those experimental novelists—and to extend the happiest years of his life.

A university rule on M.A. theses prohibited him from following that plan: the main topic could not be the work of a writer still alive. His mentors, Latham and Files, suggested he look into the writer from whom those others derive: Henry James. Leon, not yet twenty, had never heard of him. He first dipped into *The Wings of the Dove* and was captivated by the opening lines of the novel. He recalled, in "How I Came to Henry James": "This was as good as Joyce—and as dramatic: Kate looking at her own anger in a mirror, like a close-up in a movie . . . then pages and pages of inner thought, forerunner of 'the stream of consciousness.'" His research led him to ponder the significance of the novelist's experiment in the theater (1890–95): perhaps a study of James's theatrical experiences would illuminate his experimental novels of the late nineties and the great novels of this century—perhaps provide a single key to both his dramatic and his narrative creations. Verification of this working thesis would come much later. The title of his M.A. dissertation was "Henry James and Some Recent Psychological Fiction."

Leon was then granted one of the newly instituted Province of Quebec Scholarships for study abroad; it gave him one hundred dollars a month—very generous in the late twenties. He proposed to study French journalism in Paris. He had worked as copyboy for the *Yorkton Press* during high school days and edited the school student newspaper, and he helped support himself at McGill by working as a reporter for both the Montreal *Herald* and the *Daily Star*; he became bilingual by picking up French during college years. An important sojourn was his trip to Vienna. Leon did not then know it as the city of Freud, but he was led in that direction by a fortunate encounter with a sister of friends in London. The young English pianist, Shula Doniach, then studying with Artur Schnabel, introduced Leon to the seminar conducted by Alfred Adler in August 1930.

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The first essay in his *Stuff of Sleep and Dreams* (1982) tells of that important meeting with the former disciple of Sigmund Freud. Leon asked him if the Adlerian "individual psychology" might help in literary studies.

He proceeded to explain "applied psychoanalysis" to me; if I wanted to be a biographer or critic I had to look at some of the materials clinicians examined. What were a writer's personal relations, his family relations? How did he set about his career?

Biographers, he told me, need to remind themselves constantly of the nature of the human struggle for some form of human expression and self-assertion. He was particularly illuminating about the struggle between siblings in a given family.

That last sentence is especially meaningful and must have been so for Leon when he began to look into the life of Henry James, younger sibling of the dominating William. Leon himself knew something of siblings at first hand. Adler's attitude toward what he popularly termed "the inferiority complex" seems to have struck home with the young man: "Low self-esteem breeds anxiety, fear, excessive timidity, and a burden of guilt; it fosters rage and frustration, exaggerated competitiveness, and often concomitant violence." All this would one day help him to understand not only Henry James but also the figure who lost his hound, his bay horse, and his turtle dove.

Leon took the advice of friends (notably E. K. Brown) to earn a degree to take home with him, something "to show." He decided to pursue work on Henry James, begun in Montreal, that would lead to an advanced degree from the local university. He contacted Professor Charles Cestre, pioneer of American studies at the Sorbonne, and proposed doing a scholarly study of James's plays. Preparatory research led him to people who had known James personally, such as the monologuist Ruth Draper, who put him in touch with nephew Harry James; he also met Harley Granville Barker, George Bernard Shaw, the doorman of St. James's Theatre (where *Guy Domville* failed in 1895), James's last secretary, Theodora Bosanquet, and William Morton Fullerton, an American journalist in Paris. On March 24, 1931, he wrote to James's old friend and co-expatriate Edith Wharton at her home outside Paris to seek her aid:

Dear Madame,

I am completing a work on Henry James and his interest in the theatre, in an effort to trace the influence of his "dramatic years" on his later "dramatic" novels: and a second work on the prefaces of Henry James, an exposition of his theories and methods as he explained them in the prefaces to the Definitive Edition.

Mrs. Wharton, nearing seventy, invited him to her home, the Pavillon Colombe in Saint-Brice-sous-Forêt.

Leon duly wrote his *thèse principale, Henry James: Les Années Dramatiques*, and his *thèse complémentaire* (in English), *The Prefaces of Henry James*; then he suffered through the necessary *soutenance*, a public defense of his theses before a tribunal of Sorbonne professors. In 1932, the French government awarded him the degree of Docteur-ès-Lettres. He dispatched copies of his dissertations to a number of people he felt would be interested, one to Harry James as his uncle's executor, and another to Elizabeth Robins, who had played the female lead in James's early play *The American*. That October, Mrs. Wharton wrote to compliment Miss Robins on her book, *Theatre and Friendship: Some Henry James Letters with a Commentary by Elizabeth Robins*, and added as a postscript: "I am so glad you said a word of young Edel [in your book]. It will give him great pleasure & he deserves it for his piety toward H. J." Wharton's good opinion proved helpful.

Leon had loved his Paris years: they had been an exalted extension of his student years in Montreal, and he had met, in addition to Edith Wharton, the young Cyril Connolly, Allen Tate and Caroline Gordon, Léonie Adams, and Ford Madox Ford. "I was a junior hanger-on of the expatriates in Montparnasse," he observed; "I could have drifted like this for all my life: it was enchantment." "I was a born loafer," he said to me not long ago. Disenchantment jolted him, however, on his return to Montreal in 1932: his impressive qualifications opened no gates to academe. The whole continent remained in the grip of the Depression. Leon was himself depressed but knew that he was fortunate to be able to return as a journalist to the Montreal *Herald*. In 1934 the French news agency Havas beckoned from New York. He accepted. The next

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year he married Bertha Cohen, and in 1936 was sent to Paris as "l'oeil de New York." Once there, his thoughts turned again to his unfinished academic project, an edition of the plays of Henry James. He resumed his association with Edith Wharton; she invited him to the Pavillon Colombe to meet James's old friend Gaillard Lapsley. Leon applied for a Guggenheim Fellowship and wisely asked Wharton to support him. She rose to the occasion, writing that the young man possessed "the sympathy and understanding which are necessary to lift a work of erudition to the level of literature."

His application was successful, but his commitment to his new post with Havas meant postponing tenure of the fellowship until the spring of 1937. Leon and Bertha crossed to London to copy the available James plays located in the Lord Chamberlain's office. Harry James had been favorably impressed by *Les Années Dramatiques* and had given Leon permission not only to prepare the edition of his uncle's plays but also to examine the family papers on deposit at Harvard in the Widener Library. That summer, back in the United States, Leon dipped into the boxes of papers at Harvard; with them he discovered a sea chest that had belonged to Henry James, and among its contents he found the remaining plays and also the author's personal notebooks. Flipping through the notebooks he came upon a passage that confirmed the theory on which he had based his M.A. thesis at McGill and *Les Années Dramatiques*—the entry for Valentine's Day 1895. There James recognized fit compensation for his recent failure in the theater, "the precious lesson . . . *of the singular value for a narrative plan too* of the . . . divine principle of the Scenario . . . a key that, working in the same *general* way fits the complicated chambers of *both* the dramatic and the narrative lock." Leon applied for and was granted a continuation of his Guggenheim Fellowship in 1938, but again his commitment to Havas prevented him from accepting anything more than a three-month tenure of the fellowship. His hopes were even further lowered by the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939.

Leon transferred to the New York bureau of Canadian Press and later to the cable desk of *P.M.*, the New York newspaper. There he continued, at a standstill, until he was inducted into the United States Army in 1943, assigned to military intelligence and thence to psychological warfare. He went into Normandy less than two weeks after D-Day. Serving in General Patton's Third Army with distinction, he earned five battle stars and was decorated for valor in action—a Bronze Star. Participating in the Liberation of Paris was a virtual homecoming for Leon. In through the Porte d'Orléans—just a short stroll down Boulevard Jourdain from la Maison Canadienne, where he had lived in his student days—then up Boulevard Raspail to the Boulevard du Montparnasse and the rue Vaugirard. There were the famous cafés of the City of Light he had known—the Dome, the Select, the Coupole, and the Rotonde. The snipers were still at work as the Allied troops rounded into Montparnasse in the long cavalcade that brought Charles de Gaulle back to the French capital. Across the gay glass fronts of another day, chairs and tables were heaped up in earthquake disorder. Down the way, at the Gare Montparnasse, Nazis in field green—the disheveled unhelmeted children of Hitler's "master race"—were surrendering in terror or glum despair. It was strange (Leon recalled further), "stranger than all fiction, to encounter at this moment, in the July twilight, scenes of a dead past. For a brief moment the cafés were filled with people: I suddenly remembered Kiki of Montparnasse; in the midst of war, in the thronged street, I could smell chicory and Pernod, the pervasive *tabac* and stale beer."

After a year with the occupation forces in Germany, Leon came home across the Atlantic and was demobilized as a First Lieutenant (he had won a field commission) in April of 1946. He was soon to turn forty; he was at loose ends, and again as alienated as ever. He found himself as depressed as he had been on his return from France thirteen years earlier. He resumed his career as a journalist, but paper after paper folded. His marriage was at a stalemate. There was a large revival of interest in Henry James, and Leon was not participating in it. He entered psychoanalytic therapy for a period of three years.

At that point a new Leon Edel emerged. His analyst cast him back upon his own resources: "You came to be given, to be told what to do; instead you had to give and to make decisions and act on your own," he wrote in "Confes-

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sions of a Biographer." Edel realized that he had been adrift in his own boat for half a lifetime but now must take charge, put his hand on the tiller. He would no longer follow the easy, passive way, accept his role as that of an outsider, and draw as little attention to himself as possible; now he would become the active, assertive master of his own fate, spurn those who would threaten to further his alienation, and establish his own claims. He arranged for a divorce and took up the work of his future.

Of course, Edel had not been absolutely idle up to that time. He had published a little study, *James Joyce: The Last Journey*, in 1947; and he was at least thinking about embarking on a biography of Henry James. He was actually out of a job in early 1949 and collecting unemployment insurance, but he flung himself into preparing the scholarly edition of James's plays that he had begun a decade earlier; *The Complete Plays of Henry James* appeared that year. He had also been entertaining the idea of editing a collection of James's ghost stories; *The Ghostly Tales of Henry James* was duly published in 1949. The effect of the double publication was therapeutic; furthermore, the two volumes were very well received on both sides of the Atlantic. George Stevens of Lippincott offered Edel a contract to write the life of Henry James; Rupert Hart-Davis in England did the same. The loafer, the outsider could recognize the signs of welcome—and yet of threat. Had the bay horse been found? Was there a hound on the horizon, perhaps a turtle dove?

Following the success of those volumes, Edel accepted a position as visiting professor at New York University and remarried in December 1950. He was, at forty-three, a late starter in academic life; James's notebooks, which he had seen in 1937, had already been published by two Harvard professors in 1947. It was time to assert himself. For the next two years he worked assiduously at the beginnings of a biography of James. One volume was ready by late 1952; Lippincott wanted to publish it alone, which was flattering. *Henry James, The Untried Years: 1843–1870* came out in 1953. But there was something troublesome about the haste: Edel knew very well that there had to be vast resources of James material as yet undiscovered and that, once revealed, it might necessitate revisions and alterations in that initial volume. As he acceded to Lippincott's demands, Edel made a virtue of necessity. He determined to structure the first volume—and projected succeeding volumes—in such a way as to permit him retrospection, flashback, and of course anticipation; the developmental line would be episodic, scenic. He would use a narrative method that liberated him from the confinement of strict chronological progress, that enabled him to enjoy the demanding freedom of the novelist. With that structuring, Edel had adopted the technique of the modern psychological novelist—of Proust, Joyce, Woolf, and James himself.

Nine years elapsed before another volume of *Henry James* was published. Edel had meanwhile become a figure of interest to the academy. In the summer of 1952 he taught at Harvard and then conducted the Christian Gauss seminar at Princeton. New York University gave him the security of a tenured position as Associate Professor in 1953. He was invited in 1956 to give the Alexander Lectures at the University of Toronto. Those lectures form the basis of *Literary Biography*, Edel's first book of biographical theory. The opening chapter, "Subject," indicates the interrelationship of the central elements in his approach and argues that "more art than science is involved in the process, since biography deals with emotions as well as with the intellect, and literary biography with those emotions which give the impulse to literary creation." In chapter 4, "Psychoanalysis," he addresses the criticism that increasingly assailed his own biography of James—amateur "psychologizing"—by explaining and offering justification of his practice of psychobiography.

Edel had visualized his *Henry James* as a trilogy; a volume on the middle years and a final one on the master would round it out. The second volume, however, grew into a pair; *The Conquest of London* and *The Middle Years* appeared together in 1962. They won him a Pulitzer Prize for biography and a National Book Award for non-fiction. Yet his introductions continued to address adverse criticism and attempted to justify his method—and with incomplete success. In spite of all, he was extending his control over the whole range of James studies by preparing modern, inexpensive editions of James's works—novels, tales, critical essays, travel pieces, etc.

The first of these (1953) was an edition of

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the puzzling, denigrated experimental novel *The Sacred Fount.* Edel's introduction not only made sense of the book at last but pointed out its technical finesse and thematic concerns and related them to other of James's work, such as the similarly vexing "The Turn of the Screw." He explained his approach thus:

> Our method will be quite simply to begin with the text, as all criticism worthy of the name must begin, to determine what a close reading may yield. That done, we shall seek further light by relating this work to other works of James and to other Jamesian modes of representation. Finally, since no work is created in a void but is the projection of a given mind at a given time (and we might add in a given place), we will seek the illumination of biography. It will be shown that any one of these approaches . . . can clarify the work and that by using all three we may arrive at the richest understanding.

That describes the Edelian critical method used in all his introductions to James's fiction. There is a rather sharp irony, then, in Edel's constant defensive attitude to critics—to "pure" critics, he would often say, meaning the "know-nothing" New Critics—whom he always has felt to be antagonistic to him (as indeed many were). At their best, of course, the New Critics followed the very method Edel outlined; and "at their best" is what the late Randall Jarrell had in mind when he made his mot, "New Critic is only Old Scholar writ large."

In 1955 Edel published *The Selected Letters of Henry James*; he was to prepare a second *Selected Letters* in 1987. In 1957 he edited (with Ilse DuSoir Lind) the first reprint of James's travel books, *Parisian Sketches*, and (with Dan H. Laurence) *A Bibliography of Henry James* (two subsequent editions have appeared since that). He began editing *The Complete Tales of Henry James* in twelve volumes, published at the rate of four volumes a year, in 1962. He prepared *The Diary of Alice James* with a substantial biographical sketch of Alice in 1964, and with that the first reprint of a volume of James's criticism, *French Poets and Novelists.*

In 1966 New York University appointed Edel the Henry James Professor of English and American Letters. The following year the University of Toronto made him Visiting Centennial Professor. He really was no longer an outsider in academic circles; furthermore, the invitation from Toronto resembled a "welcome home" to a kind of wayward son or at least, McGill being in Montreal, to a wayward nephew.

Yet even at this point of his career Edel was plagued with the sense that his right to a position in academic life was still in question, that he was not truly appreciated, that what place he had might easily be usurped. He remained keenly sensitive to criticism of his psychobiography. He rode fence diligently around his Jamesian domain, alert to the threat of encroachment by other scholars, and for that proprietary stance he was also chastised. His response, in the interview of 1985 with the *Paris Review*, clarified his rationale:

> I was committed to a long-range project, I had devoted years to it and it had cost me a great deal. In simple business terms I wasn't going to tolerate trespassers. There were plenty of other subjects in the world open to them; the old frontier spirit of my childhood asserted itself. I had established my territory. I didn't see why I shouldn't exercise my rights.

The proposed third volume of *Henry James* had also grown to two. *The Treacherous Years* came out in 1969; Edel's introduction to it is one of his most important commentaries on literary psychology. It is the most confident and assured of the five he wrote for this biography—confident of the psychoanalytic approach and assured in its explanation of his technique of biographical narrative. At the outset, Edel points to a major concern of this volume—James's "spiritual illness" following his failure in the theater in 1895 and in the face of the symbolic dawning of the new century, and his managing "to rid himself of his private demons by writing about them." Edel's discussion of the fiction that appeared after the fiasco of *Guy Domville* argues that James "reconstructed" his own development and progress through the medium of his tales of threatened children and teenagers—*The Other House* (1896), *What Maisie Knew* (1897), "The Turn of the Screw" (1898), and *The Awkward Age* (1899). On that evidence Edel claims that "creation—when it does not degenerate into the pathology so common in our midst today—is a work of health and not of illness, a force for life and life-enhancement, not a mere anodyne or 'escape' or a symptom of neurosis":

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the inner troubles and conflicts, the morbidities and sufferings of Proust or James, Virginia Woolf or Kafka, or that very sick artist whose wit and humor have given us the poetry of *Finnegans Wake*, represent victories of life over death, triumph of art over despair.

A good example, because of its comparative brevity, of Edel's psychobiography, is the forty-page sketch *Henry D. Thoreau* (1970, number 90 in the series—University of Minnesota Pamphlets on American Writers—of which number 4 a decade earlier was his *Henry James*). It sharply displays the flaws in the traditional view of Thoreau—the myth of the solitary soul on Walden Pond and righteous advocate of civil disobedience for morality and justice—and exposes him as an egotist, a curmudgeon, and finally an artist. Edel explains the paradoxical author of *Walden*: we are not to take that account of "Where I Lived and What I Lived for" as a reliable *factual* account but rather as an artistic, metaphoric creation that not only enables us to see the troubled psyche of the author but also how he turned those psychological troubles into art. The pamphlet is a demonstration in brief compass of the Edelian principles laid out in the introduction to *The Treacherous Years* and realized at length in the five-volume biography of Henry James. In conclusion Edel says of Thoreau, "We must rank him with the 'disinherited' and the alienated, with the writers who find themselves possessed of unconquerable demons and who then harness them in the service of self-preservation. Out of this quest sometimes mere eccentricity emerges; at other times art."

The final paragraph of Edel's introduction to *The Treacherous Years* casually observes:

> Readers of *The Middle Years* . . . will notice that I have gone back in time in the present volume to the beginning of the 1890's. The previous section covered the years 1882 to 1895; the present section takes up certain parts of my story between 1890 and 1895 hitherto omitted in the interest of a sustained "story line" [and] . . . to make use of certain materials not available to me when I was writing the earlier sections of the life of Henry James.

The final volume, *Henry James, The Master: 1901–1916*, was published in 1972. The best appreciation of the biography is that given by Dennis W. Petrie in his *Ultimately Fiction: Design in American Literary Biography* (1981), especially because he confronts the severest and most frequent objections to Edel's aims and accomplishments, and with appreciable success—persuasive argument and ample illustration.

In the spring of 1955, Edel accepted an invitation from Gregg Sinclair, Professor of English and then President of the University of Hawaii in Honolulu, to serve as visiting professor. In 1971 he was appointed to a newly created chair, Citizen's Professorship of English at the University of Hawaii. He did not sever connections with New York University, but for a time divided his academic year between New York and Honolulu. That year, *The New Yorker* magazine published a "Profile" of Edel by Geoffrey T. Hellmann; it remains one of the most substantial interviews with Edel and proved to be rather prophetic. Asked about his new position in Hawaii, he confessed, "I'd like to stay there the rest of my life." Honolulu has remained his home. Then, replying to the obvious question about what he would do now that *Henry James* was completed, he suggested that he might do "a book of biographical essays"; before the decade was out, he published *Bloomsbury: A House of Lions* (1979). The Bloomsbury Group, "nine characters in search of an author," Edel calls them in his preface, provides the opportunity for further illustration of the Edelian mode of psychobiography and of his adaptation of another feature of modern narrative—a series of vignette portraits that effectively accumulate into a unified whole.

Edel was elected to the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters in 1972. The Academy-Institute awarded him its Gold Medal for Biography in 1976. In the meantime his four-volume selection of *Henry James Letters* began to appear in 1974. The James family had given to Edel exclusive publishing rights to some of the basic source materials of the biography until its completion. The manuscript letters, however, were always open to general study. Still, a common criticism of the *Letters* accuses Edel of fashioning his selection to support his life of James. Publication of the *Letters* extended over a decade.

Edel's first revision of the biography of James was published in two volumes in England by Penguin in 1977. By no means an abridgment, it is in fact slightly longer than the original and contains new material. *The Life of Henry James* is distinctive in several ways.

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The nature and effect of Edel's achievement here is well expressed by Daniel Mark Fogel in his long essay in *The Henry James Review* (Fall 1982); the first part of the essay offers an appraisal of the five-volume *Henry James.* Fogel agrees with Petrie's objection to Edel's manner of documentation and failure to acknowledge the work of other Jamesians—"from a certain point of view at least," Fogel writes, "Edel's scholarly Achilles heel" (p. 20). Yet he excuses that feature of the original biography by calling it "an older style . . . which aspires to the apparently casual grace of the amateur . . . and which seeks to engage an audience of cultured readers far broader than any narrow-grained clutch of specialists." Such an attitude enables Fogel to argue for the superiority of the two-volume *Life* over the original; the later version is quite without documentation and acknowledgments. The absence of customary scholarly apparatus, however, can be a vexing headache to a fellow scholar, and for obvious reasons. Fogel nevertheless makes some persuasive points: although the episodic narrative mode of the original is maintained, the revision excises some of the less graceful signals of anticipation, for example—"he could not then know that," "he would discover later that," and so on. More important, Fogel notes, are the "strategic additions . . . which bolster his psychological interpretations of James's life and work, particularly at points at which the [five-volume] biography has come under heaviest attack." Toward the end of his essay, Fogel makes the observation, which most readers would endorse, "Above all, there is a new tone of mastery in the definitive *Life of Henry James.*"

In his seventieth year when *The Life* was published, Leon Edel was recognizably "the Master" in his own area of art. He left regular teaching and the other quotidian demands of academic life in 1978, when he was elected Professor Emeritus by the University of Hawaii (he had been similarly honored by New York University in 1973). In 1979 he closed another chapter of his life by divorcing his second wife and marrying the novelist and poet Marjorie Putnam Sinclair. He was awarded the National Arts Club Medal for Literature in 1981. The same year he received the honor that probably touched him most deeply: he was recognized by the Honpa Hongwanji (Japanese) Temple on Oahu as a Living Treasure of Hawaii. The hound, bay horse, and turtle dove would seem to have returned and settled in.

By the middle of the eighties, Edel had published three more important works. *Stuff of Sleep and Dreams* is a selection of his papers on psychology and the application of psychoanalytic techniques to biography and literary criticism, which he revised and assembled at the Rockefeller Foundation's Study and Conference Center at Bellagio on Lake Como. The book is a further refinement and illustration of Edel's consistent but constantly developing principles and practice. In a long memo he sent me a couple of years ago, he explained:

> I think that when I assembled the various papers in *Stuff of Sleep and Dreams* (1982) I finally arrived at a definition of what I was driving at. It hasn't been generally understood or accepted. This is that psychoanalytic psychology is useful to biography but not in its therapeutic way; and those who have used Freud and others have always lapsed into therapy. The only part useable in biography is what we learn about dreams, fantasy, and the human emotions. . . . The definition I give . . . —that Literary Biography and literary psychology as I call it involves "the adaptation of psychology and psychoanalytic concepts to the study of mankind's ability to create and use symbols and myths, in essence a study without therapeutic purposes—of what literature *expresses* of the human being who creates it."

Ironically, that feature of Edel's work in which he has taken most satisfaction is perhaps his most obvious Achilles heel—his adaptation of psychoanalytic theory to the art of biography. The broadest critical minds, noting that perceived weakness, nevertheless willingly set it aside (unforgiven) for the sake of the various virtues of his achievement as biographer.

In that same year Edel also published the revised and considerably enlarged book of biographical theory, *Writing Lives: Principia Biographica.* Soon thereafter came another realization of a project adumbrated in his 1971 interview with *The New Yorker*: "Some day, I'll revise the whole James biography and put it in one volume, adding new stuff," he told Hellmann. *Henry James: A Life,* one volume, appeared in 1985—an abridgment and revision derived from his earlier biographies of James. The revision accounts for the greater candor with which Edel discusses "the passional life of the celibate James" (preface, xii), especially

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the relationship of Henry and his older brother. Although an abridgment, there is again new material: for example, discovery that Ernest Hemingway originated the myth that James was rendered impotent by the "obscure hurt" he suffered in his youth, and revelation of a new and instructive source for "The Turn of the Screw." Edel had the expert aid of Catherine Carver in making the abridgment, yet he was intimately involved in the volume. It was by no means just a routine, run-of-the-mill job for him. I happened to be in his study on the morning his editor phoned to say *A Life* had won the National Book Critics' Award for Biography. At the close of the brief conversation, Edel hung up the phone and exclaimed—distinctly, but to no one but himself—"I did it!" Still unmistakably the feisty competitor even after all his honors, he cherished the award.

One of the strongest reviews of *A Life*, balancing stern criticism with just praise, is by Alfred Habegger in the *Henry James Review* (Spring 1987). It begins with a judicious observation on the difference between scholarship on James and that on other American writers: "For James there is only one biographer and sifter and editor of letters. The many excellent and sophisticated critics this author has attracted have not included a single independent biographical researcher." Habegger then suggests that "it is time to reflect on some of the disadvantages of this anomalous one-man rule." Yet he readily admits, finally, that it is hard "to imagine that some *one* will arise and write a biography replacing Edel's" (my emphasis). And there have been a couple of unsuccessful attempts since then.

Nevertheless, Edel's consistent urge to prove himself and to keep the antagonist at bay has remained active. Following *A Life* he prepared (with me) *The Complete Notebooks of Henry James* (1987). A good deal of new material had been made available, and Edel had always argued that Matthiessen and Murdock in their 1947 publication of *Notebooks* had not properly edited and annotated the text; also, their inserted comments were too heavily interpretive and explanatory and thus an intrusion upon a text being unveiled to the world for the first time. In reviewing their *Notebooks*, Edmund Wilson criticized the commentaries by Matthiessen and Murdock for "standing in front of the text." The aim of the *Complete Notebooks* was to gather into a single volume all the preliminary notations behind James's publications—and to do so without the prescriptive interpretations that characterized the earlier *Notebooks*. (Some readers and reviewers continue to regret the loss of that running commentary.)

Edel's editing of Edmund Wilson's notebooks and diaries, which he began in 1975, ended with publication of *The Fifties* in 1986; he decided to leave completion of the series, *The Sixties*, to Lewis M. Dabney. In 1988 he provided a foreword for Susan Quinn's *A Mind of Her Own: The Life of Karen Horney*. Soon after, Edel began his response to the sincere request of his friend the poet W. S. Merwin in "A Letter to Leon": "It would be hard not to want to hear the biographer turn his fully accomplished art upon his own life, and hear it become a story true to itself. . . . How did the Leon I know, Leon the biographer himself, and the friend, come about?" (*Leon Edel and Literary Art* [a volume of tributes to Edel on his eightieth birthday], p. 83). With his wife, Edel returned to the Rockefeller Center in Bellagio to work on his memoirs. One can be reasonably sure that they will reaffirm two salient features of his life and career: that he has always felt a greater affinity with artists than with academics, and that deep in his heart he feels more Canadian—*voire Canadien*—than American.

There will evidently be some overlap between Leon Edel's memoirs and another work he has in preparation, a book on Canadian literature. In 1984 he was invited to the Memorial University of Newfoundland to give the E. J. Pratt Lecture. He chose as his topic "Memories of the Montreal Group" and discussed those writers he had known and worked with during his years at McGill University and after. The lecture concludes:

> Looking back I recognize that I have composed enough Canadian tributes and other essays to fill an entire volume that might bear the tentative title "The Montreal Group and Other Canadians." In fact I have a distinct feeling that this might become its first chapter.

Edel prepared a new, updated edition of one of his earliest volumes, *The Complete Plays of Henry James* (1949), for publication by Oxford University Press in 1990. In 1995 he provided a new introduction to *The Sacred Fount*,

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based on material in his preface to the Hart-Davis reprint and his comment on the novel in *The Treacherous Years*, for New Directions Publishing Corporation. Most recently a new paperback edition of Edel's one-volume biography, *Henry James: A Life*, has been brought out by HarperCollins (1996). He has in hand two particular editions (again with me): Theodora Bosanquet's *Henry James at Work* (1924, 1929) for Editions du Seuil, and James's correspondence with four young men (Hendrik Andersen, William Morton Fullerton, Jocelyn Persse, and Hugh Walpole).

Leon said to me, not long ago, talking of younger Jamesian scholars and of his own achievement: "They'll soon be rewriting me." The pronoun *They* is likely right enough. It is sobering to realize that any rewriting of Edel will require several hands; it is very hard to imagine any other *single* figure taking on the Herculean task he has performed alone. A lion in the path. One might conclude a review of Leon Edel's career by adapting to it a slight modification of his own words about James: "We can see that what he produced was . . . a large and splendid series of literary monuments. In it is enshrined his consciousness, his artistry, the power of his 'unageing intellect.'"

How to Tell

THOMAS CARPER

Not when my friends remind me they are there—
Seeking opinions, telling me their own—
Do I so fully sense how much we share
As when together we are most alone.
While music plays, perhaps, and each is so
Enthralled the other seems to disappear,
Our energies surge equally to show
We are ourselves a single atmosphere.
And then, perhaps, we stand before a scene
Intrigued by always differing details,
Yet we are as one eye, gazing with keen
Affection on the view. When talking fails
As we move inward toward particular ends,
Heartfelt attention tells us we are friends.

✪ THOMAS CARPER lives and writes in Maine. His two collections of poetry are *Fiddle Lane* and *From Nature* (Johns Hopkins University Press).

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A Victorian Professional Man

THE SELECTED LETTERS OF LESLIE STEPHEN. Volume 1, 1864–1882, Volume 2, 1882–1904. *Edited by John W. Bicknell. Ohio State University Press. $65 each.*

SONYA RUDIKOFF

Who was Bishop Colenso? And what were the Thirty-nine Articles? What was *Essays and Reviews*? Who was Governor Eyre and what happened in Jamaica that inspired committees in London to protest his harsh verdicts? Any Victorian specialist can enlighten you about these matters, and can also explain disestablishment of the Irish Church and political maneuvering before the Second Reform Bill. Burning issues of the past do not continue burning with the same intensity, as historians and biographers discover. In writing about Fitzjames Stephen, his brother, Leslie Stephen, founder of the *Dictionary of National Biography*, read through all that eminent judge's early writing for the *Pall Mall Gazette* and the *Saturday Review*. Fitzjames had been a well-known journalist, and later an important member of the Council in India, who revised the penal codes. Leslie Stephen observes of Fitzjames's comments on the events and issues of the 1860s,

> The great mass of such work is necessarily of ephemeral interest; and it is painful to turn over the old pages and observe what a mould of antiquity seems to have spread over controversies so exciting only thirty years ago. We have gone far in the interval; though it is well to remember that we too shall soon be out of date, and our most modern doctrines lose the bloom of novelty.

It was hard to judge Fitzjames's writing of the 1860s, but out of loyalty the younger brother tried. In 1895, those controversies no longer had any current urgency and Leslie Stephen feared that his own work in the future would meet a similar fate.

Perhaps the same comment *could* be made of Leslie Stephen's writing. The problems of great concern to Stephen may no longer be of interest. Questions of belief as well as intricate doctrinal questions are not the same and do not bedevil contemporary writers and editors, or even the reading public. The problem of the Thirty-nine Articles may no longer excite discussion, as it did for Stephen, for Henry Sidgwick, and T. H. Green, and today no academic job or fellowship requires such an oath of belief. Leslie Stephen was an agnostic, in a nation divided between an Established Church and multiple examples of Dissent. When he married his second wife, her relatives were horrified that she was marrying an agnostic, referring to him as a "brute." There were different matters of concern then: Radicalism, the Working Men's College, the question of Broad Church principles, Ritualists, Ecclesiologists, Tractarians, Anglican sisterhoods, the question of marriage with the deceased wife's sister.

Leslie Stephen's letters, recently published in a selection edited by John W. Bicknell, touch on many questions of the day. The editor, mindful of Stephen's own strictures about his brother's preoccupations, has not included letters that are too minutely concerned with issues of transient concern. In his letters to such friends as Charles Eliot Norton and James Russell Lowell, he assumed their awareness of political questions and instead reserved his comment for personal matters.

SONYA RUDIKOFF has contributed reviews to THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR for many years. Miss Rudikoff died earlier this year in an accident in her home.

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But he *did* comment on the progress of the American Civil War, especially when the news was good. He recounted his dealings with editors and publishers, some of his family activities, some of his triumphs in mountain climbing, and his travels in America. He did not write about Queen Victoria or the politicians and statesmen of the day, or the burning questions. Readers will find Stephen's more succinct and more developed opinions in his essays.

Professor Bicknell has done a remarkable job in presenting Stephen's letters. This two-volume selection represents only a part of the enormous correspondence Leslie Stephen conducted, as a Victorian man of letters, as editor of the *Cornhill*, and as editor of the *Dictionary of National Biography*. Earlier, as a fellow and tutor at Trinity Hall, Cambridge, and as a writer for serious periodicals, as a son, a brother, a husband, in the pre-telephone age, he wrote frequently and fluently. In 1906, two years after Stephen's death, his devoted friend, F. W. Maitland, the historian, published *The Life and Letters of Leslie Stephen*, but no serious effort to collect Stephen's correspondence has been undertaken since then. Professor Bicknell, who probably knows more about Stephen than anyone else, has made a judicious selection of the letters, and has added introductory commentaries, chronologies, and descriptions of Stephen's correspondents. The notes are full and appropriate, the appendices valuable, the index useful. As Bicknell puts it, he has not attempted to supplant Maitland but to *supplement* him, and one feels that Maitland would have appreciated this effort.

The liveliness of Stephen's early letters is engaging. They begin in 1864, when he was thirty-two. A son of Sir James Stephen, Undersecretary for the Colonies, and a descendant of Claphamites, he had taken orders five years before, primarily because his father wanted one of his sons to be a clergyman. But he was full of doubt and after 1862 could no longer conduct divine service. Although still at Trinity Hall, he resigned his tutorship, then lost his faith, and moved to London to become a journalist. As he wrote to James Russell Lowell, "the business of being a parson" had become "odious" to him, although leaving Cambridge was an effort, because

> I had been vegetating for near fifteen years in comfort. I had a luxurious set of rooms. I walked about in a gorgeous cap and gown, and every one that I met took off their hats to me. Now in London I find that people don't instinctively recognise me. I can walk down the Strand without causing any visible sensation. The change is, I believe, good for me, because an English university is only too pleasant a place for a bachelor. You live on free and easy terms with a great number of men—all rather above the average in education—and there is no place in England at any rate, where you can express any opinions or occupy yourself in any way with more perfect freedom. (13 January 1865)

London was a comfortable setting for Stephen as he began his writing career. His mother, sister, brother, and family were all there. He knew people, he began to know more people. His brother helped him to get work at the important journals of the day, and he enjoyed referring to writing for them as "penny a lining." He wrote on Alpine scenes, he wrote fortnightly letters for the New York *Nation*, and began a lifelong friendship with Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr., James Russell Lowell, and Charles Eliot Norton, whom he had met on a trip to the United States. The letters refer to these encounters and to subsequent travels in the Alps and elsewhere. He met Thackeray's daughters, Anny and Minny, and soon became engaged to Minny. Letters to her and to Anny, a writer, are jolly, quirky, and affectionate. The wedding, accomplished in an eccentric fashion, at eight in the morning, was described to distant friends. The married couple wrote from Switzerland to her sister and others, and when they returned to England, they stayed in Henley, exuding happiness:

> Now I ought, if I have done rightly, to have conveyed to you the impression that I am almost happier & more comfortable than a man ought to be in this world. For, to say the truth, I believe myself to have been very much in want of a wife & to have been not a little spoilt by my donnish existence at Cambridge. . . . I was wanting to take root, & am only thankful that I have done so to my heart's content. (18 August 1867)

Anny Thackeray lived with them—"the model of all conceivable sisters-in-law"—and the Thackeray friends were added to the Stephen friends. The picture he evokes of their life in London is very cozy:

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My mother & sister & my brother have migrated across the park & we live within a few minutes walk of each other & with sundry cousins we form a little colony in the neighborhood of the South Kensington museum. (22 December 1867)

Another trip to the United States was planned. Even in 1869, he continued to speak about his family happiness, thanking Anny for her love, but "I still feel like a frozen animal that has been taken in & thawed by benevolent people & am sensible of being expanded & improved in every faculty I possess." Later, he would call his sister-in-law "the most affectionate and sympathetic woman I know." The birth of Minny's baby, after several miscarriages, rounded out the felicity of his life. In 1871, he became editor of the *Cornhill* at a salary of £500. He also wrote for *Fraser's*, the *Fortnightly*, and he worked on *Essays on Free Thinking and Plainspeaking* and the *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*. He breakfasted with Mrs. Henry Adams, lunched with Mrs. Gaskell's daughter, dined with Tennyson, walked to Tunbridge Wells to meet his free-thinking friend, John Morley, editor of the *Fortnightly* and of the English Men of Letters series. His was the fortunate and useful life of a Victorian professional man.

In 1875, on his forty-third birthday, Stephen's happiness was shattered by Minny's sudden death, in another pregnancy, of eclampsia. He never again celebrated his birthday. The "hideous nightmare" that followed his loss gradually subsided into melancholy, and he said to his friends, "the best half of my life is buried forever." Minny is a less distinct figure than Anny—bright, sweet, and amusing in her letters, and important for her strong effect on Stephen; but she left him so suddenly, we are mostly aware of what her loss meant to him.

Stephen and Anny, with his child and Anny's young wards, moved to a house left to him by Minny, in Hyde Park Gate, inaugurating the next big chapter of his life. He resumed his writing, wrote and published various essays, among them *An Agnostic's Apology*, corrected proof for his big book, visited friends, went to the Lakes, to the Alps. Other losses surrounded this major one—his mother had died some months before Minny, and his devoted and well-loved sister-in-law, Anny, had announced her engagement to a man much younger than she, an engagement that Stephen deplored—but he was in good health and he was surprised by his own endurance in mountain climbing. He remembered Minny being in the Alps with him, and, in Tennyson's lines, "The voice of the dead was a living voice to [him]."

In Hyde Park Gate next door lived the widowed Julia Duckworth, who had also moved there recently with her three children, and who was still in mourning for her spouse, whose death seven years earlier had been as abrupt and terrible as Minny's. The story of their friendship, courtship, and marriage occupies several letters in the second volume of Bicknell's selection.

The seventeen years of Leslie and Julia Stephen's marriage provide the background for these letters to friends and publishing acquaintances while he edited the *Cornhill* and continued with his literary work. Julia became a powerful and necessary part of Leslie Stephen's life, an influence, a standard against which others were measured. Hauntingly beautiful, noble in spirit, empathic, she was a "strange solemn music to which [his] whole nature seemed to be set." After her death, he said to Maitland, "you could not by any language, overstate the enormous influence of my Julia upon my whole life since I knew her." He revered her, even worshiped her, and seems to have awakened her frozen spirit. Their evident happiness struck others. In 1879, when they had been married less than a year, they visited the brilliant young mathematician, W. K. Clifford, dying of tuberculosis, and his wife reported that "they both looked tall and grave and thin, as if they remembered a world of sorrow, and understood ours, and were half ashamed of the happiness they had recovered for themselves."

Together Leslie and Julia Stephen made a life, with their children from the earlier marriages, their friends, Julia's relatives, and Anny. They had four children of their own. They went to Cornwall in the summer; he went to the Alps in the winter; she was devoted to nursing ill family members. Many letters were written between the two. Unfortunately, most of Julia's letters have disappeared, but late in his life Stephen copied, paraphrased, and abstracted some of her letters to him, while composing a family memoir

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for his children. In 1882 Stephen resigned from the *Cornhill* to devote himself to his exciting new project, the *Dictionary of National Biography*, which is the subject of many letters.

Leslie Stephen's voice is vividly heard in these letters—his humor, his impatience, his anger, his apologies, his irritable and peppery responses. The letters touch on Stephen's intellectual heritage of evangelicalism, rationalism, Darwin, agnosticism, politics, social morality, and ethics. But the formation of his thought is not the major subject in his letters. Bicknell provides the necessary and expansive notes to identify the personages and problems Stephen refers to. He also cites Stephen's reading and writing at the time of the letters: for example, in 1874, to Charles Eliot Norton, in a long letter about various subjects, Stephen mentions working on an article about Ruskin. He had been reading *Fors Clavigera*, and in the *Fortnightly Review*, in May 1874, there appeared his article "Mr. Ruskin's Recent Writing." Whether it is Alexander Bain, a friend of Mill's, or the family of Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr.'s wife, or the Ritchie relatives of Anny Thackeray's husband, Bicknell supplies the information needed for a reader to feel the vividness of Stephen's correspondents, or the immediacy of the encounters his letters describe.

So, in 1880, we can almost *see* a delegation of the Stephens and Mrs. Clifford going to call on George Eliot. The highly respected literary personage had married a much younger man following the death of her life's companion, G. H. Lewes. The Stephens and their friends wanted to protest this offense against decent feeling. But, just as they were about to leave to pay this visit, in came Mrs. Oliphant, the novelist, exhausted and in need of tea. By the time she had finished her tea, it was too late to go. The next news they had was of George Eliot's death.

From 1864, Stephen was active and productive. Between 1871 and 1882 he had edited the *Cornhill*, and he also published *The Playground of Europe* (1871), *Essays on Free Thinking and Plain Speaking* (1873), *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century* (1876), *Samuel Johnson* (1878), *Alexander Pope* (1880), *Swift* (1882); and in the English Men of Letters series, *The Science of Ethics* (1882), *The Life of Henry Fawcett* (1885). Between 1891 and his death in 1904, he published a new edition of *Hours in a Library* (1892), *An Agnostic's Apology* (1893), *The Life of Sir James Fitzjames Stephen* (1895), *Social Rights and Duties* (1896), *Studies of a Biographer* (1899 and 1902), *The English Utilitarians* (1900), *English Literature and Society in the Eighteenth Century* (1904), and studies of George Eliot, Hobbes (again in the English Men of Letters), and an edition of J. R. Green's letters series.

The letters of Leslie Stephen's last years are less entertaining but equally absorbing. Having resigned the editorship of the *Cornhill*, he proceeded to develop plans for the *Dictionary*, a project that required strategic planning, marshaling of contributors, complicated assignments of subject, and vast editorial work. But this once-exciting venture gradually turned into a burden, greatly taxing his energies. In 1891, he gave up the *Dictionary*, after some bouts of illness, and some fainting spells, one while at the Atheneum. Julia Stephen's death in 1895 was another terrible punctuation for him, marking the end of his active life. He would live nine more years, becoming increasingly deaf, depressed, querulous but feeling "deader than ever. I could no more get into a rage about Dreyfus than I could about the death of Charles I" (11 September 1899). In the same state of mind, several years later, he observed to William James,

> I am pretty well for my age [he was nearly 69]; but I feel the touch of age very plainly & more plainly every day. I finished that book, of wh. you speak so kindly, with a sense of utter weariness. I am played out & shall undertake no more big books—not even the interesting one you suggest. I go on writing as a habitual drunkard goes on drinking; it is a habit of my lonely life. . . . I don't think I have anything to tell mankind upon serious matters wh. is the least worth their hearing. (9 May 1901)

In 1902, he learned that he had cancer. From that moment until his death in February 1904, his efforts were directed toward preparing himself for death in a resolute manner. He remained alert, read a great deal, had many visitors, and his final illness was protracted, although without great pain. He took leave of his friends and family in the stoicism of his agnostic faith.

So the life of this eminent writer, editor, and historian, this Victorian professional man, came to an end. He had been knighted, he

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left a great body of work, he left a modest but respectable estate, and his ashes were buried in Highgate next to Julia's grave. Later, a round blue plaque was affixed to his house in Hyde Park Gate, signifying that an eminent person had lived there.

The account of Stephen's life is incomplete without some attention to his great passion for walking and climbing. He went often to Switzerland, to climb the well-known Alpine peaks. He knew the villages beneath them, the views from different vantage points, the conditions at different times of the year. There were gatherings and societies of climbers. It was a whole world, albeit a small one, because climbing was just beginning to attract enthusiasts.

What the Alps meant to Leslie Stephen may be found in his many writings on climbing. A fellow Alpinist said "the Alps were for Stephen a playground, but they were also a cathedral," suggesting the spiritual dimension of his activity, something well beyond the merely athletic. Frederic Harrison observed, "The Alps were to Stephen the elixir of life, a revelation, a religion." The mountains *spoke* to Stephen; poetry might be more articulate, but the mountains had "a grasp upon [his] imagination." His enthusiasm for the Alps inspired in him a desire to educate and convert others, so writing about the mountains became almost as important as climbing. "He originated a new way of treating the Alps, and a way by which all who followed him have been more or less consciously influenced," said Lord Bryce.

Stephen's climbing began in 1855. Mountaineering was still in its infancy, the Alpine Club was forming, and some of the significant works on climbing were coming into print. In the next few years, Stephen began exploring the high Alps with his guide, Anderegg, and accomplished the ascent of the Bietschhorn, the Allalinhorn, the Blümlisalp, the Schreckhorn, and other stupendous climbs—the Jungfrau, Weisshorn, Mont Blanc. Stephen had come to his reverence for the Alps from Ruskin:

> When long ago the Alps cast their spell upon me, it was woven in a great degree by the eloquence of *Modern Painters*. I hoped to share Ruskin's ecstasies in a reverent worship of Mont Blanc and the Matterhorn. The influence of any cult, however, depends upon the character of the worshipper, and I fear that in this case the charm operated rather perversely. It stimulated a passion for climbing which absorbed my energies and distracted me from the prophet's loftier teaching. I might have followed him from the mountains to picture galleries, and spent among the stones of Venice hours which I devoted to attacking hitherto unascended peaks and so losing my last chance of becoming an art critic. I became a fair judge of an Alpine guide, but I do not even know how to make a judicious allusion to Botticelli or Tintoretto. ("In Praise of Walking," 1901)

In *The Playground of Europe*, Stephen devoted two essays to attitudes about Alpine scenery. It was a new love for the nineteenth century. Eighteenth-century travelers had been terrified in crossing the Alps. These mountains, like Gothic architecture, were frightening, raw, savage, barbaric, uncivilized. Jungfrau and Mont Blanc were regarded as "hideous excrescences," as evidence of the Creator's mystifying purposes. Intrepid Alpine travelers had told of caves, of dragons flapping their gigantic wings, of devils, pygmies and other primitive creatures in their caves and aeries in the frightening Alpine wastes. Bishop Berkeley recommended going to Italy by sea!

The newer attitude toward mountains was linked with romanticism, the renewed admiration for Shakespeare, Gothic architecture, and the modern revolutionary spirit. Stephen noted the absence of luxury and the charms of a simple life in quiet Alpine valleys. The mountains were "places of refuge where we may escape from ourselves and from our neighbors. There [said the man from London] we can breathe air that has not passed through a million pair of lungs; and water in which the acutest philosophers cannot discover the germs of indescribable diseases." Industrial development, population growth, modern communications, transportation, and the advances in economics and technology made modern people turn eagerly to "savage rock and glacier, and the uncontaminated air of the High Alps." There was even a certain moral value: the Alpine peasant was thought to be noble, the simple life of homespun cloth and black bread and milk was virtue itself.

Victorian feelings about the redemptive power of mountains accumulated until the end of the nineteenth century, when other sentiments were added to form powerful attitudes among the educated classes. In London, Stephen organized a little group of walkers

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who called themselves "The Sunday Tramps." They would set out from central London, take a train to some more rural spot, and walk great distances, sometimes stopping at the houses of such friends as Frederic Harrison or Charles Darwin, but still walking back the thirty or forty or fifty miles they had set themselves. His fellow "tramps" included Maitland, Frederick Pollock, the legal scholar, Croom Robertson, the editor of *Mind*, R. B. Haldane, the Liberal statesman, and Norman MacColl, editor of *The Athenaeum*. Although they were intelligent, educated, even talkative men, they did not necessarily talk very much while on a tramp: Stephen especially was rather quiet.

Stephen impressed others with his "coolness, self-possession, and firm-footed yet cautious tread when on a perilous ice-slope," and no one believed that "A Bad Five Minutes in the Alps" was made up, as he insisted in a footnote in that essay. Until 1888, he found "that mountain mania" still possessed him. But in 1891, with great regret, Stephen retired from Alpine climbing, restricting himself to long walks in Cornwall. His last "tramp" was in 1894.

The Alpine climber described in the accounts of his fellow Alpinists was heroic and spirited, quite unlike the nervous "tantrumical" figure anxious about his *Dictionary*. Contemporary readers are more familiar with the irascible figure that appears in his children's memoirs. The figure of Mr. Ramsay in *To the Lighthouse*, which Virginia Woolf published in 1927, is usually read as a portrait of her father. The character is an intense, irrational household tyrant, who bellowed in anger at those who crossed or failed him, who childishly wondered why his whiskers wouldn't grow, who begrudged every household expense. Mr. Ramsay was mean-spirited about the children's trip to the lighthouse, although *Stephen* had encouraged his daughters to paint and write. It seemed to the seven young people at 22 Hyde Park Gate that this lugubrious widower and father in his sixties was exaggerating and trumpeting his losses. The record he had begun to keep for the children came to be called *The Mausoleum Book*, and it was full of the deaths of relatives and friends.

This last picture of Leslie Stephen has somehow come to represent the excesses of Victorianism, requiring liberation at the hands of the Bloomsbury Group started by his children. It is hard to reconcile the picture of Stephen in his cantankerous deaf old age with the thoughtful letters of his last years. James Russell Lowell thought him "the most lovable of men." Trevelyan said Stephen "never seemed to think an ignoble, a feeble or a timid thought." Meredith thought Stephen "had in him the making of a great military captain." But contemporary readers have been told that such contradictions and contrasts between public and private life are an example of Victorian hypocrisy and duplicity.

Maitland was certain that to have known Leslie Stephen was "part of our life's unalterable good," and he applied to Stephen the final words of his 1896 essay, "Forgotten Benefactors," that the good done by a noble life and character may last beyond any horizon that can be realized by our imagination. Nowadays, we regard such statements as misguided, hypocritical, willingly deceptive. The whole Victorian age is especially vulnerable, and the modern reader suspects those tributes to Stephen from Maitland, Trevelyan, Bryce, or the Alpine guide who said of him, "Der ist ein Herr." Some readers find more revealing the reports of Stephen's demonic thrift as he examined the household books. How then to deal with these contradictory claims, these rivaling views of his children and his friends? How is it all to be understood?

Bookish

A HISTORY OF READING. *By Alberto Manguel. Viking. $26.95.*

Reviewed by JONATHAN ELUKIN

Alberto Manguel's graceful meditation on reading is an intimate and scholarly attempt to capture the varied human experiences of reading. Like a captivating and voluble guest, Manguel holds forth about a dazzling range of subjects: theories of vision, learning to read, book production, reading as metaphor, silent reading, reading in bed, the history of libraries, and forbidden reading. Manguel, an essayist and translator, explores these and other

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topics with a mixture of history, literary anecdote, and personal memory that shape each chapter into separate essays. Yet the book succeeds as a unified work because Manguel leads us gently and naturally from one subject to another. Each excursus is part of Manguel's quixotic attempt to describe the totality of reading—a desire that he parodies at the end of the book with examples from an impossibly complete version of such a history of reading. The book also coheres because all of the books that come within Manguel's vision are in some way linked themselves: "Every book has been engendered by a long succession of other books whose covers you may never see and whose authors you may never know but which echo in the one you now hold in your hand."

Manguel's South American childhood and education broaden the scope of the book beyond the borders of the classical and European world. He marshals evidence as well from Islam, Judaism, and Japan, making the story of reading universal. In his discussion of the act of reading aloud, for example, we learn about the Cuban *lectores* who were paid to read novels, newspapers, and political tracts to the workers in early cigar factories. Soon suppressed in Cuba as subversive, the practice survived in the transplanted Cuban cigar manufacturing community in Florida. From there, we are led back to medieval monasteries where monks read aloud selections of Scripture according to the Benedictine Rule and forward again in time to rural England of the eighteenth century where one Tam Fleck, "who, not particularly steady at his legitimate employment, stuck out a sort of profession by going about in the evening with his Josephus, which he read as the current news." Asked about the night's news, "Tam entered with his Josephus under his arm, and seated himself at the family fireside. 'Bad news, bad news . . . Titus has begun to besiege Jerusalem—it's gaun to be a terrible business.'"

One of the book's charms is how Manguel energizes different acts of reading. We all become heroic readers. For example, choosing a library book is a struggle with those minds behind the organization of the library: "Whatever classifications have been chosen, every library tyrannizes the act of reading, and forces the reader—the curious reader, the alert reader—to rescue the book from the category to which it has been condemned." Truly heroic struggles, as Manguel records, can be found in the efforts by slaves in the American South to learn to read even at the risk of brutal punishment.

Manguel is at his best when he concentrates on the powerful beauty that reading can provide. He has a particularly effective chapter on translation that is divided between a case study of Rainer Maria Rilke's translation of the work of a sixteenth-century poet and the great drama of biblical translation that culminated in the group effort of the King James Bible. Rilke was able to invest Louise Labé's rather technical poems—so anchored in her own time and culture—with a transcendent quality. His reading may not be the most accurate translation, but it vivifies poetry whose own power has dimmed. The translators of the King James Bible also read with certain prejudices and instincts, and their decisions to find resonant yet not wholly accurate readings created a text whose beauty still lives. Surely "The Lord is my shepherd: I shall not want," is more striking than the translation from the earlier Bishops' Bible: "God is my shepherd, therefore I can lose nothing."

Manguel tells us the wonderful story of Count Libri (yes, Count Libri) the most famous book thief in nineteenth-century Europe. As inspector for a French governmental commission charged with cataloging the books and manuscripts dispersed after the French Revolution, Libri scoured local libraries and stole thousands of priceless manuscripts and ultimately had to flee France. Happily, most people find meaning in reading a book rather than stealing it. Here, too, Manguel guides us with a sure hand. He understands how books can have such deep power. They can tell us our future as they have for generations of men and women who sought signs from randomly selected phrases of Virgil or the Bible. And they have even more power to tell us about our past. "To write down one's impression of Hamlet as one reads it year after year," Virginia Woolf wrote, "would be virtually to record one's own autobiography, for as we know more of life, so Shakespeare comments upon what we know." Reading is not just a private endeavor, for it links us to other people. Manguel knows that bond we feel with other people when we share a book: "Sitting across from me in the subway in Toronto, a woman is reading the Penguin edition of Borges's *Laby-*

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rinths. I want to call out to her, to wave a hand and signal that I too am of that faith.

Manguel's passion for reading is boundless and infectious: "We know why we read even when we don't know how, holding in our mind at the same time, as it were, the illusionary text and the act of reading. We read to find the end, for the story's sake. We read not to reach it, for the sake of the reading itself. We read searchingly, like trackers, oblivious of our surroundings. We read distractedly, skipping pages. We read contemptuously, admiringly, negligently, angrily, passionately, enviously, longingly. . . . And sometimes, when the stars are kind, we read with an intake of breath, with a shudder.

Manguel might agree that we are blessed—or condemned—to read like we live.

Manguel's book helps assert the vitality of a culture of reading. It does so even as Manguel flirts with the now-pervasive sense that a text is open to any interpretation. It is true in some sense, as Manguel asserts, that the text needs the reader or that the reader completes the text. But Manguel's own work makes it clear that such a role brings great responsibility. A good reader cannot ignore the author or the context of a written work even as he or she reads. Without that sense of responsibility there is no dialogue, only the cacophony of individual voices.

Manguel preserves that culture of reading in the wonderful anecdotes and stories that we can—to use a somewhat dated phrase—dine out on. We don't have to agree with Kafka who, as Manguel tells us, said:

I think we ought to read only books that bite and sting us. If the book we are reading doesn't shake us awake like a blow on the skull, why bother reading it in the first place? So that it can make us happy, as you put it? Good God, we'd be just as happy if we had no books at all. . . . What we need are books that hit us like a most painful misfortune, like the death of someone we loved more than we love ourselves, that make us feel as though we had been banished to the woods, far from any human presence, like a suicide. A book must be the axe for the frozen sea within us. That is what I believe.

Well, Kafka does have a point. But sometimes we need a respite from those books, and Manguel's history of reading would make any reader—even Kafka perhaps—happy.

Enigmatic Boxer

JOSEPH CORNELL: THEATER OF THE MIND. SELECTED DIARIES, LETTERS, AND FILES. *Edited with an introduction by Mary Ann Caws; foreword by John Ashbery. Thames and Hudson. $35.*

UTOPIA PARKWAY: THE LIFE AND WORK OF JOSEPH CORNELL. *By Deborah Solomon. Farrar, Straus & Giroux. $30.*

Reviewed by PETER DAILEY

When the ballerina Tamara Toumanova met Joseph Cornell backstage after one of her performances in 1940, she found the artist, although only thirty-seven, "already an elderly man, rarely smiling, never laughing out loud." Photographs of Cornell are even less equivocal; he is unfailingly polite, unsettlingly remote, his inscrutability seems indistinguishable from despair; he looks, the poet Charles Simic suggests, like Melville's Bartleby "the day he gave up his work to stare at the blank wall outside the office window." Almost all recollections of Cornell concur, emphasizing his gaunt, ghostlike appearance and preternatural shyness, perhaps because, along with his reclusive and eccentric way of living, these aspects of the artist's personality seemed of a piece with the mysterious, austere emotional landscape enclosed in his famous boxes.

For Cornell, the boxes he fashioned in the basement workshop of his white-framed house in Queens functioned as considerably more than frames surrounding their ephemeral contents. Many of his constructions resembled small and discrete worlds—dollhouses, shop-windows, or toy theaters—in which some drama is to be played out. They are works of great beauty and strangeness. Some are dominated by a single figure, who is, in a sense, Cornell's alter ego. A doll in turn-of-the-century hat and muslin dress stands frozen in place while a silvery screen of branches intertwines around her; a Renaissance portrait of a Medici boy by Pinturicchio is encased in varnished oak and amber glass so that the whole assemblage from the vending-machine photos of the subject to the maps of Venice that line the bottom and sides reproduces the faded

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tints of the late autumn woods; a series of owls nest among the bark and leaves of hollow tree trunks beneath an unconvincing approximation of the moon. John Ashbery saw in Cornell's art "a romantic universe in which inexplicable events can and must occur" and the sort of "charged atmosphere" from which "minimal art . . . draws its being."

Equally singular is the way we look at what is contained within the boxes, which is often furtive, transitory, and occasionally voyeuristic. Objects are sealed behind glass, concealed by shadows, photostated through a filter, and cropped. Thus the *Penny Arcade Portrait of Lauren Bacall* from 1945, one of a series inspired by a chewing-gum machine in a BMT station at Thirty-fourth Street, is half-a-dozen different shades of dark blue. At its center, Miss Bacall casts an oblique glance, her three-quarter profile further obscured by glass shelves. Many of the accompanying photos are indistinct. They form a cityscape over which night is rapidly falling. The subject of a Cornell box is often less an arrangement of objects than a point of view.

For most of his life Joseph Cornell shared a small house on Utopia Parkway in Flushing, New York, with his mother and his brother Robert, who was incapacitated by cerebral palsy. The death of Cornell's father, a prosperous textile designer, in 1917, was a blow that left his family in vastly reduced financial circumstances from which they never recovered. Three years later Cornell left Andover without graduating to rejoin the family and contribute to its support.

Cornell's career as an artist seems appropriately fortuitous. He never drew, painted, or photographed, and until mid-career he was not adept enough as a carpenter to build his own boxes. (His appearance in November 1931, at the Julien Levy Gallery, with some "montages" of his own, made of illustrations scissored out of nineteenth-century books, remains as startling now as it must have been then.) He was drawn, however, to the Fourth Avenue bookstalls and shops along the Bowery, which he combed for engravings, photographs, printed ephemera, or unusual objects, collecting and clipping compulsively, at times irrationally. Over the years he assembled a massive archive grouped by theme in "files" or "dossiers," bits of which eventually found their way into his constructions. Those few—usually women—allowed to see his workshop reported that the wooden shelves by the coal furnace sagged under the weight of this material.

The history of "outsider" art is full of similar lives ruled by some unknowable compulsion. Unlike most, though, Cornell had a sophisticated awareness of contemporary art. Critics list among his formative influences the early de Chirico, Max Ernst's nineteenth-century engravings in *La Femme 100 Tetes*, Kurt Schwitters, Eugene Atget's photographs of Parisian storewindows, and the dioramas of the Museum of Natural History. With the exception of Ernst, however, these are in fact more affinities than influences. Although Cornell was nurtured by the New York surrealist milieus, had exhibited with them, and had employed the same sort of materials and emotional syntax, the similarity is easily overstated. Cornell's "New England spareness and transcendentalism," Harold Rosenberg perceptively noted, has more in common with Emily Dickinson than with the sexual effrontery and nihilistic recklessness of an artist such as Dali. A devout Christian Scientist, Cornell's interpretation of certain church doctrines was fundamental to his way of experiencing and looking at the world.

Joseph Cornell's Theater of the Mind: Selected Diaries, Letters, and Files, skillfully edited by Mary Ann Caws, is an absorbing compilation of material from the voluminous Cornell archives at the Smithsonian. Unfortunately, most entries are from Cornell's last twenty years, when his most creative period was behind him: the less sustained and inspired his work, the more, apparently, he felt the need to write. Nevertheless, the book offers a fascinating look at this fragmentary and elliptical artist.

Sitting at his kitchen table in the early morning, warming himself by the oven, watching the birds alight on the branches of the quince tree in his tiny backyard, Cornell reads *Science and Health* and jots on the back of envelopes or other scraps of paper. His nightmares, dreams, and insomnia, attempts to shake off feelings of enervation or torpor, suppressed feelings of anger, hysteria, or anxiety are recurrent themes.

He rides his bike around Flushing and walks along the shore of Long Island Sound, examining the flotsam and jetsam. There are fascinating glimpses of his working method: "During hot days gathered examples of Goldenrod

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grasses on bike—threshed them down to pulverized essences for *OWL boxes*—the pungent odor filled the cellar with Indian summer." His description of life in this cellar studio, where he worked at his boxes for fifteen years, fifteen hours a day, is of particular interest. Cluttered with his exotic store of ordinary objects, it came to resemble an animal's burrow. Often he is listening to WQXR, New York's classical FM station, or to a record from his large collection. Schumann's *Carnaval* (in whose dreamer hero, Eusebius, Cornell saw himself), a recording of *I Puritani*; the piano music of Déodat de Séverac—all evoke for him elusive moments or fugitive moods he noted in a sort of emotional shorthand.

Cornell's approach to his material is sensuous and painterly: he delights in uncovering some "sumptuous dark blue velvet," which is put to work in *Taglioni's Jewel Boxes.* Of one of his *Soap Bubble* set, he notes that "a great deal of its effectiveness depends, I think, on the shining whiteness of the paint. I applied at least six coats of the best enamel obtainable, and under glass it will retain its lustre indefinitely." He also records his frustration with the form itself, his "intense longing to get into the boxes this overflowing, a richness and poetry felt when working with the boxes but which has often been completely extraneous in the final product."

Cornell's idealization of women was a fundamental aspect of his work and life. In his boxes they figure as ethereal, spiritlike beings—the swans, sylphs, and nymphs portrayed by Fanny Cerrito, Fanny Ellsler, Taglioni, and other great romantic ballerinas of the nineteenth century whose careers Cornell had studied with the obsessiveness and pedantry of the autodidact—or as Hollywood goddesses. In each, Cornell perceived a chaste and virginal innocence approximating his own, and each, translated into an image in his boxes, bears the burden of Cornell's rapturous yearning and regret with serene equanimity. In real life, the objects of his fascination were a great deal less exalted: young waitresses, bank tellers, or checkout girls at the Flushing supermarket, most of high-school age. The diaries chart his obsession in pathetic detail.

The great adventures of Cornell's life are his trips into the city. As an eighteen-year-old textile jobber, he traveled every day to lower Manhattan and made the rounds of wholesalers with a case of cloth samples, an activity for which his extreme reserve left him painfully unsuited. It introduced him, however, to the Fourth Avenue bookstores, galleries around Union Square, and the automats and cafeterias where, between appointments, he could sit and read. By the time the diaries are under way, the locus of his investigations has shifted to Forty-second Street and "the neon-lighted crepuscule of Times Sq." New images and materials clipped from *Arizona Highways, National Geographic,* or skin mags he has found in the back-number shops begin to appear in his work. In the evening, he heads for Grand Central and the train back to Flushing. "Leaving city clear brisk day," he writes on December 12, 1946, "—emerging from subway tunnel across water swinging around the elevated track curve looking across the freight yards at the city skyline with broken windswept clouds & crimson effects of light on the buildings." "My work," he acknowledged, "was a natural outcome of my love for the city."

There are occasional resolutions: "Resolve this day," he affirms on February 2, 1947, "as before to transcend in my work the overwhelming sense of sadness that has been so binding and wasteful in the past." In this he was never very successful.

In *Contre Sainte-Beuve,* Proust faulted his revered predecessor not only for a series of particularly obtuse judgments of such contemporaries as Baudelaire and Stendhal but for a method "which consists, if you would understand a poet or writer, in greedily catechising those who knew him, who saw quite a lot of him, who can tell us how he conducted himself in regard to women, etc.,—precisely, that is, at every point where the poet's true self is not involved." Very few biographies are able to withstand these strictures, and Deborah Solomon's *Utopia Parkway: The Life and Work of Joseph Cornell* is not one of them. Intelligent, conscientious, and uninspired, it draws on scores of interviews with surviving friends and acquaintances as well as writings by and about Cornell, yet it creates a portrait that conforms in almost every respect to the judgments offered by critics twenty and thirty years ago. It contains little that sheds light on the formation of Cornell's peculiar sensibility, the sharpening of his mind or the discovery of his voca-

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tion. On the other hand, one learns more about the family tension obliquely referred to in Cornell's diaries and of his "inordinate sense of filial piety" Cornell felt for his formidable mother. There is a lot more, inevitably, about his sad thwarted sexuality, Solomon's description of which is reminiscent of the more richly elaborated pages of Krafft-Ebing. Her portrait, however, is unlikely to alter the way anyone regards Cornell or his work.

In the case of Cornell, the discontinuity to which Proust refers is especially pronounced. The *Diaries* are the work of a man of courage and steadfastness and a great generosity of spirit. How disappointing then to learn that he was regarded as a "difficult person to remain friends with," dour, suspicious, quick to take affront, paralyzed by neurotic indecisiveness, with an unwholesome interest in young females and a penchant for five-hour monologues over the phone. One acquaintance described him as "one of the great bores of the world" and cautions against assuming that "because so much of his work was lively and gay and amusing that it stemmed from a fascinating personality."

In a very real sense, Cornell's work was autobiographical. His assemblages often appear to be little more than collections of random articles—cutouts of parrots, glasses, clay pipes, cork balls, torn pieces from turn-of-the-century French newspapers—that, taken together, inexplicably convey a haunting sense of absence and emptiness. For Cornell, however, each disparate object possessed an associative or anecdotal significance; often a chain of affinities, or even a narrative, linked them. His conviction that in Simic's words "all things are interrelated" and are "all fragments of an unutterable whole" lends his best work its tension and coherence.

To contemplate a Joseph Cornell box, then, is to confront a conundrum—one that the artist cared little whether anyone ever solved. (It comes as no surprise to learn that one of Cornell's favorite books was John Livingston Lowes's *The Road to Xanadu.*) The boxes are riddles that writers such as Sandra Leonard Starr have expended much effort and ingenuity in answering. Such assiduousness, however, helps to explain only one strand of meaning—the conscious meaning—of an art that is multi-level, intuitive, and, on its most profound level, unprogrammatic. These critics tell us what Cornell thought the boxes meant to him, but very little about what they mean to us. The doll in the forest of twigs, set down outside of time like Perrault's Sleeping Princess, was for Cornell the work in which his vision of innocence was most perfectly realized. For Simic, and others, it seems vaguely sinister and erotic.

Cornell was a compulsive reworker, and many of his best pieces took from five to ten years to finish; friends to whom he had presented boxes often received polite letters asking for their return so that he could "take out the slack" or "refurbish" them. It is not at all clear, however, whether his art was the result of concious choices or whether, as one critic suggests, he was "drawn from image to image, object to object, in a fog of compulsion." Ultimately, the boxes refuse to yield their secrets; at their core remains an element of inscrutability. They are filled with images of ordinary, everyday inexplicability. Fairfield Porter, writing about Cornell, quoted a judgment of De Nerval's poems by one of his contemporaries: "Their mystery is of such a unique quality that their emotional power possesses the [spectator] without his wishing to translate their secret into less secret language."

The New Rigidity

THE OPENING OF THE AMERICAN MIND: CANONS, CULTURE, AND HISTORY. *By Lawrence W. Levine. Beacon Press. $20.*

Reviewed by SETH FORMAN

Since the appearance in 1987 of Allan Bloom's *Closing of the American Mind,* the academic left has been searching in vain for a rebuttal to match the grand scale of Bloom's exegesis on the condition of liberal education in the wake of 1960s radicalism. Even admirers of Bloom can sympathize with the quest. Positive developments in academic scholarship have received scant attention from critics engaged in the task of dismantling the "post-structuralist" hold on our universities. The

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time has come, one might reasonably conclude, for a small triumph on behalf of the good scholarship that has lived in stony silence alongside the shenanigans.

For this reason, word that the historian Lawrence Levine had embarked on such a project stirred great enthusiasm. An exemplar of post-1960s scholarly achievement, Levine's work on black history and popular culture remains a model of intellectual integrity in the very fields most susceptible to the kind of academic soft-headedness Bloom originally set out to expose. Unfortunately, Levine chooses to defend the university in terms of a liberalism that has been largely eclipsed by radical perspectives he never fully addresses and therefore fails to deliver a properly measured evaluation of American higher education.

To begin with, Levine adheres to a view of multiculturalism that seems to predominate on very few campuses. "At its core," Levine explains, "multiculturalism as a historical approach means that to understand American culture . . . it is crucial to study and understand as many of the contributing cultures and their interactions with one another as possible." But as Diane Ravitch has pointed out, there are really two multiculturalisms competing for influence over the development of educational curricula, and the bad multiculturalism, in which the study of neglected cultures is abused for purposes of political gain, seems to have made at least as much headway as the good multiculturalism laid out by Levine. The results of the bad multiculturalism have included the high visibility of theories such as the ones that claim that Africans invented mathematics and that "Long Hut" Indians shaped the United States Constitution, as well as such widely used college textbooks as *Multicultural Literacy* (published by Graywolf Press), which contains thirteen protest essays with such titles as "Invisibility Blues" and "Who Is Your Mother: The Red Roots of White Feminism." Other examples of the "bad" multiculturalism abound. A New York State committee assigned to overhaul the social studies curriculum in 1990 included Professor Ali Al'Amin Mazrui of the State University of New York at Binghamton, who has written that "the decline of Western civilization might well be at hand. It is in the interest of humanity that such a decline should take place."

Levine's refusal to confront the bad multiculturalism is particularly frustrating because it is undoubtedly true that the recent study of such previously uncharted subjects as African Americans, women, workers, immigrants, homosexuals, folklore, popular culture, Native Americans, Hispanic Americans, Eastern and Southern Europeans, and domestic life and leisure has yielded some useful knowledge that did not exist before the 1960s. But when Levine declares that "we are breathing life back into the history of people we had allowed to disappear from our consciousness," and that the "result has been exhilarating," the virulence of the statement itself belies the less "mind-opening" aspects of contemporary multiculturalism.

The feeling that the whole story about the contemporary university or the nature of American pluralism is not being told strikes the reader of this book at almost every turn and results from Levine's decision to dress the radical influence on the university in liberal clothes. Levine sets up a conservative monolith out of a diverse group of critics, which he claims harkens back to a mythic time when there was an agreed upon "canon" of Western literature that formed the backbone of a liberal education. But most of the critics that Levine discusses—among them, Bloom, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., Roger Kimball, James Atlas, Gertrude Himmelfarb, and Richard Bernstein—do not long for some nonexistent past, but merely for that period of American higher education before the late 1960s, when the university was shedding its former provincialism, dropping its discriminatory admissions policies for ones based primarily on academic merit, and generally realizing the liberal "cosmopolitan" intellectual ideal of that era.

Not surprisingly, Levine agrees that the most positive changes in American higher education occurred in the 1950s. What died in the 1950s, Levine writes, "or at least suffered an inexorable blow, was a certain arrogance, an unquestioned assurance that Western Civilization embodied all the culture and history and literature we needed to know to live our lives and comprehend our past and present." In other words, the universities did not give up their mission to study "the best that had been thought and known in the world," but it was acknowledged that this material may be found in places few had ever thought to look.

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Where Levine and the critics of the university part company is the key historical moment of the late 1960s, at which time radical students held whole universities hostage, many times at gunpoint, demanding curriculum changes, liberalized admissions policies, and separate ethnic studies departments replete with faculty recruitment procedures over which the students themselves would have veto power. Never before, it seemed, did academic freedom and the requisites of rational inquiry become so clearly subordinate to the political exigencies of the moment, and Levine's tireless effort to show that the late sixties were not aberrant is singularly unconvincing.

For Levine, the 1960s were a benevolent time in which the cultural uniformity of previous decades completely broke down and in which colleges and universities appropriately abandoned their core curricula and textbooks in favor of electives and paperbacks chosen by faculty. In his view, the uproar in the universities amounted to nothing more than the repetition of familiar battles fought over the past century in which academic progressives pushed for changes in the curriculum against the resistance of stuffy university aristocrats. In the late nineteenth century, for example, Harvard President Charles Eliot fought to have Shakespeare, Milton, and Chaucer included with the Romans and the Greeks in the "classical curriculum." Western Civilization courses as we think of them today emerged only after World War I, largely as a response to the war and the large-scale migration of Southern and Eastern Europeans to the United States. Before this period, American critics were loath to associate themselves with European culture, a reflection of the belief that the American character was uniquely shaped by the experience of continental expansion and settlement. But with the destruction of Europe, the United States hoped to define itself as its heir and to ensure cultural uniformity. The rise of "Western Civ" courses throughout American colleges during the interwar years, one critic has observed, reflected "the sudden emergence of America as the repository of Western culture in a world overrun by Fascism."

"Clearly," Levine writes triumphantly, "the shaping of the college curriculum in response to an increasingly diverse population has not been confined to our own time." But his analogy between the adoption of the Western Civ core requirement as a response to increasing diversity and the decline of Western Civ as a response to still greater diversity is a weak one, not only because it caricatures the methods that brought these two major curricular changes about, but because of Levine's selective interpretation of the history of immigration and assimilation in American life.

In the first place, the difference between such college administrators as Harvard President Charles Eliot or Columbia College director F. J. E. Woodbridge, who implemented the famous Contemporary Civilization course at Columbia in 1919, and the riotous students of the 1960s seems obvious. In what other period did American students use force in order to impose changes in such vital university functions as admissions, faculty recruitment, and the creation of whole academic departments? Say what you will about Bloom's condemnations of contemporary college students—their view of sex as an organized sport, their attraction to mind-numbing rock music, etc.—but one must at a minimum concede that the stormy period of the late 1960s, in which radi-

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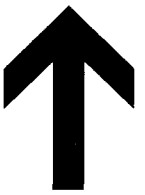

A NOVEL OF SUSPENSE
By Theodore Roosevelt Gardner II
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cal students "discovered that the pompous teachers . . . could, with a little shove, be made into dancing bears," transformed American universities into political battlefields as no previous era had. Levine is mistaken if he believes that such administrators as Eliot and Woodbridge represented the same challenge to authority and academic freedom as the cantankerous students.

More problematic is Levine's reading of immigration patterns as they relate to curricula change. While it is true, for instance, that the influx of non-English-speaking immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe touched off paranoiac jeremiads about threats to "American character" and the "core culture" that never panned out, it is also true that severe immigration restrictions were imposed during the 1920s to deal with these concerns which, for better or worst, allowed sufficient time for the "new immigrants" to assimilate. Levine himself explains that the Western Civ core requirement was adopted at this time (along with discriminatory admissions quotas). As America and its universities were becoming more diverse, the college curriculum reflected the need for greater unity. The historic response of the university to American diversity was, therefore, not similar to but the inverse of the response we have today, in which the arrival of non-European immigrant groups continues to supply the raw material for the celebration of campus "diversity."

Levine's unwillingness to address the legacy of New Left radicalism is most evident when he describes the dominant view of pluralism in the university today in terms of a postwar liberalism that has become the favorite target of academic radicals. Levine champions the early views of such liberal sociologists as Milton Gordon, Francis X. Femminella, Andrew Greeley, and, most important, Nathan Glazer and Daniel Patrick Moynihan—scholars who maintained that the "melting pot" didn't happen, that ethnic cultures persist while integration in the institutions of the larger society takes place, and that, in this respect, the experiences of ethnic and racial groups are very much alike. Levine reveals that he himself has lived a life of color-blind ethnic "choice," and fondly recalls his discovery in the jazz clubs of his youth that "in an ethnically diverse society cultural models abounded and one had choices."

But in all of this there is not the slightest recognition that the liberal theory and social reality of "structural assimilation" has been eclipsed in favor of a more rigid racial paradigm. The dominant view of American pluralism is one now associated with such theorists as Ronald Takaki, Bob Blauner, Stephen Steinberg, Michael Omi, and Howard Winant, who insist that assimilation and ethnic "choice" are not nearly as fundamental to American group life as the "color line" and who caution against pounding "the square peg of race into the round whole of ethnicity." These scholars deplore the liberal notion of color-blindness that the older theorists advocated and insist that color has always in the past and continues today to determine the fate and identity of individuals. Because integration never worked for "people of color," the story goes, it is now necessary to support policies of racial empowerment like affirmative action, "community control" of local school districts, separate voting districts, and, most important for our purposes, educational curricula that reflect demographic differences. This perspective has provided the intellectual foundation for the establishment of the system of racial classification around which universities and most other American institutions have been organized.

The result has been an American pluralism defined along racial lines that are at least as rigid as any that existed in the past, a virtual "racial pentagon" as one critic has called it, in which those individuals who fall into the "African American," "Asian American," "Puerto Rican/Latino," and "Native American/Pacific Islander" categories are presumed to be oppressed by those of the fifth category, "non-Hispanic whites." Levine fails to consider the implications of the racial pentagon, and the race preferences that sustain it, for the life of the mind.

The rigidity of the racial pentagon does have its corollary in the world of art and literature, stemming from the political misuse of the idea of cultural relativism. Again, Levine insists that the liberal view of cultural relativism, which teaches that there is value in the study of all civilizations, is the one that predominates on university campuses. But the cultural relativism that eventually swept the universities in the 1970s in the forms of multiculturalism and "post-structuralist" theory goes much further than this, particularly in its

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distinctly anti-Western slant and its attack on literary standards. In the hands of radicals, cultural relativism was transformed into the idea that "people of color" and women, those that had historically occupied subservient roles in the West, perceive the world differently than white men, and that therefore there is no received "canon" or agreed upon body of imaginative works that every educated person should know. From this viewpoint, universal standards of truth and beauty do not exist, and texts and ideas are no longer acts of individual self-expression but merely ways of exercising power. Hence texts are "authorless," reflecting the political perspectives of social groups but not of individuals. Writers become important, or "great," to the extent that they communicate the experience of the group they are presumed to represent. This provides the intellectual justification for the contemporary study of such rap artists as Ice-T in equal proportion to William Shakespeare. If art is all about politics, than Sister Souljah and Snoop Doggie Dog are at least as important as Longfellow and Tennyson. In defending Stanford University's multiculturalist "Culture, Ideas, and Values" core requirement, Levine enthusiastically quotes from the list of allowable readings, which includes the Bible, Plato, St. Augustine, Machiavelli, Rousseau, and Marx, along with "the study of works by women, minorities, and persons of color." The fact that Stanford does not bother to identify specific female and minority authors epitomizes the view that it really doesn't matter: the value of the unnamed authors derives from their skin color or sex and not from their ability to write.

The problem goes beyond what material makes it into the college curriculum. If it is true that members of minority groups and women possess a racial or gender consciousness that not only governs their artistic interpretations but renders such work inaccessible to "outsiders," then what happens to the idea, unique to the West, that all humans are, through the use of reason, capable of entering the experience of another and empathizing with it? Levine admits that American universities are too fragmented and compartmentalized, but he does not acknowledge the role of the racial pentagon or of post-structuralism in bringing this situation about. He denies that the fragmentation of university life has any impact on society, claiming at one point that "there is fragmentation in the United States, but none of it is caused by universities or by professors or by young people. . . . [T]he real fragmentation confronting this society has nothing to do with the university."

A brief look at how recent ideas hatched in the universities have trickled down to the rest of society reveals how fully the workaday world is shaped by these ideas. The O. J. Simpson case revealed as nothing before it the prevalence of the belief that there are two different truths for whites and blacks, having nothing to do with objective facts. The legal techniques used by Simpson's lawyers have their origins in critical legal theory, which takes the view not only that blacks can never find justice in a legal system designed by whites, but that blacks and whites may have different notions of morality altogether. Critical legal scholars have devised the strategy of "storytelling," in which the morality of a case is presented to the jury as having little to do with the facts, but much to do with whether or not the verdict will empower the black community. In this cynical manipulation of the meaning of "diversity," where one's position on the presumed racial power structure, not the ability of individual citizens to evaluate the evidence, determines the "truth" of whether or not a man plunged a knife into his ex-wife's throat. Clearly, multiculturalism and its academic permutations have had a somewhat less liberating effect on the American mind than Levine suggests.

All of which brings us back to the subject of the "racial pentagon" and its influence on university life. Levine's omission of the issue of racial preferences is egregious. It is astonishing that a book that purports to be a historical survey of American pluralism and higher education fails to broach such topics as affirmative action, admissions quotas, "open" admissions, or educational opportunity programs, and Levine is defiant in his neglect of these topics. Without offering a shred of evidence, he asserts that the university "is one of the more successfully integrated and heterogeneous institutions in the United States." More likely, as Shelby Steele has noted, universities remain, largely because of racial solicitation, perhaps *the most* segregated institutions in American life, and the evidence for this abounds: the separate black and white (and Asian) tables in

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university cafeterias; the racially segregated fraternities and student centers; the concentration of black students in African American Studies departments and the social sciences; and the popularity of such separatist speakers as Kalid Muhammad and Louis Farakhan on the college lecture circuit. Much has been written about the secretive nature of racial preferences on university campuses. But that an author who contends he is debunking the myth of "political correctness" avoids any mention of these matters is an indication of just how far the prevailing ethos has pervaded academic life. It also casts a shadow on any claims to high-minded seriousness made on the book's behalf.

The New Europe

EUROPE: A HISTORY. *By Norman Davies. Oxford University Press. $39.95.*

Reviewed by VEJAS GABRIEL LIULEVICIUS

It is at once strange and yet inevitable that the very idea of Europe, so central to the identity and self-understanding of peoples who are spread across that turbulent continent, should be so hard to define. Nowhere has that struggle for definition been more urgent than in the perilous margins and borderlands of Europe. I gained a sense of this while spending the summer of 1989 in the Soviet Union. While studying in Moscow, I had slipped away from the institute where the young American scholars were housed to join up with a band of Lithuanian students from Moscow State University. We traveled deep into the countryside, away from the capital and its Kremlin, to find a place apart to celebrate Midsummer's Eve. As we changed trains and buses, walking past villages and through fields, until we finally came upon the clear tree-ringed lake that was our destination, I counted that I had broken at least ten of the rules imposed on the movement of foreigners by the still-formidable authority of the Soviet Union. Though nominally the Christian feast of St. John, the Lithuanian rituals of this night all pointed to much older pagan traditions. They called for dancing in circles about the bonfire, jumping through its flames, and launching into the lake wreaths studded with candles. And yet the political tension of those days was so strong that dancing and courtship games soon gave way to quiet conversation about the future.

Lithuania had just begun its open conspiracy of jostling toward independence, at this point celebrating the granting of a modest measure of economic autonomy. Yet the goal of complete sovereignty was the final, seemingly impossible object. Those around the bonfire all felt that the matter was pressed along by developments in free Western Europe. There the Single European Act looked forward to a united market and integrated territory by 1992, the "Year of Europe." While the institutional details of such decisions by the European Community were not clear, anxiety was all the more acute at the prospect of being left out of Europe. This fear of yet another epochal missed opportunity helped to force the pace of events and impatience for change in the crumbling Soviet sphere. Apart from calculations of economics and political realities, these students felt it self-evident that Lithuania and its Baltic neighbors were European, bound into that community by a common history, heritage and tradition, and values, though Europe's convergence had been all too often frustrated. Their midsummer night's dream looked forward to a day when this conjured European fusion would be realized, a "myth" of common origins magically transmuted into a reality.

Norman Davies' large history of Europe charts a common past, traditions, and experience, and goes a long way toward realizing important expectations of our present day. Since the revolutions of 1989–1991, we have watched for the emergence of a new pattern in foreign affairs to replace the stasis of the Cold War, new politics, new philosophical challenges, and (inevitably) new perils. Davies' book represents the study of history stepping beyond the division of the Cold War, which had locked Eastern Europe into a frozen stability and allowed Western Europe to dream of its own sufficiency. That long-awaited revolution in perspective can be found in this book of nearly fourteen hundred pages. Professor of history at the Univer-

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sity of London's School of Slavonic and Eastern European Studies, Davies is best known as the author of two indispensable histories of Poland, *God's Playground* and *Heart of Europe*. In *Europe*, he delivers an ambitious work, writing from that "heart" outward to a comprehensive narrative history of the European past, ranging from prehistoric geological ages to the present. In his passionate introduction, Davies condemns the besetting sin of overspecialization in today's historical profession. He intends his own book as a work of synthesis. Disregarding Kipling's fiat that "East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet," Davies charts the relations and interactions of the regions of Europe and its peoples, looking below the level of states and power politics to chart the depths of changing manners, national consciousness, and ideas of Europe.

This is unapologetically narrative history. It stands in a venerable tradition but provides its compelling account of the past in a new framework, assaulting many pieties of European historiography, to reveal a comprehensively new panorama. Resisting a reductive teleological view, Davies stresses that the very concept of Europe is of recent vintage, from 1700 replacing the concept of Christendom, an earlier theoretical unity. Davies gives that earlier religious definition a distinct emphasis as well, insisting that Byzantium and the church in the East cannot be left out of a comprehensive evaluation of the imperial legacy of Rome or of the Middle Ages. A parochial emphasis on Latin Christianity alone cannot purport to stand for the entire range of these ages. Even when included in general surveys, all too often that other realm in the East has been oversimplified. Davies points out that the history of the Slavs, as the largest family of peoples on the European scene, deserves commensurate attention. Yet this does not mean that an unvariegated overview would be justified. Battling a powerful teleological commonplace in popular understanding, Davies repeatedly stresses that the history of the East Slavs, of Rus', Ruthenia, or Russia, has seen many contending definitions of these peoples and lands, not reducible to inevitable Muscovite hegemony, as later propaganda claimed.

Given the uncertainty that surrounds Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus today, it is profitable to be reminded of these reviving older complexities. In discussing the humanist movement and the influence of Renaissance thought, Davies can stress with great assurance the neglected contributions of participants in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. All this serves to supersede narrowly nationalist versions of discrete, unrelated slices of European history, as does Davies' emphasis on the experience of stateless peoples. Even as they contributed vastly to the culture of the Continent, Europe's Jews lived through cycles of persecution (interrupted by the relative religious toleration of medieval Poland and Lithuania), culminating in the Nazi genocide perpetrated by Germans and their European collaborators. The fortunes of the Welsh and Scots, at a time when a British identity was equated with England, has renewed relevance today. In reflecting on Ireland's history, Davies, in a tantalizing parenthetical remark, notes that in many ways it approximates what have been simplistically labeled Eastern European models of nationalism. This aside is significant, for it seconds intuitions of uncanny similarities between the history of Ireland and that of Poland-Lithuania under tsarist rule: battles over language, establishment of "hedge schools" in a conspiracy for education, identification of national identity with sect, struggles over land tenure, romantic temper, and insurrectionary tradition. Here, as again and again throughout the book, Davies breaks down the earlier divisions, to reveal unsuspected principles of coherence and commonality.

Davies' special ire is directed against what he labels the "Allied scheme of history" and more broadly at the idea of "Western civilization" as an object of study and teaching. Davies presented his arguments against the "Allied scheme" earlier in more concentrated form in a 1994 essay in the *New York Review of Books*, "The Misunderstood War." The imperatives of alliance with the Soviet Union in the Second World War and then Cold War confrontation with that power and its bloc of satellites set the pattern for the writing of history in the decades that followed, Davies argues. Crucial distortions, while not deliberate, were the outcome of this concentration on the needs of the Atlantic alliance: short shrift given to the complexity of Eastern Europe, now submerged in what appeared as monolithic, uniform Communist control; an incom-

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plete estimate of the enormity of Stalin's "accomplishments" in systematized terror; insufficient attention to the cooperation between the totalitarian powers of Nazism and Communism; and finally in our own decade's upheavals, "the willful confusing of patriotism with nationalism in Eastern Europe" by observers and politicians in the West.

Davies' charges against the very notion of teaching Western civilization are even larger in scope. He complains that "for the best part of 200 years European history has frequently been confused with the heritage of 'Western civilization.'" After describing a dozen faulty and absurdly restrictive definitions of Western civilization, Davies concludes that "Western civilization is essentially an amalgam of intellectual constructs which were designed to further the interests of their authors. It is the product of countless exercises in ideology, of countless identity trips, of sophisticated essays in cultural propaganda." Yet this surely is an overstatement of the case. "Europe" as a concept can be, and has been, just as readily the object of tendentious and self-serving constructions as "Western civilization." The challenge is to craft understandings of both terms that do justice to the experience of European history and also the expanding legacy of Europe's debates, ideas, and connections with a wider world. Davies begins his narrative with the "Legend of Europe," recounting the abduction of Europa, Princess of Tyre, by Zeus in the form of a bull. He explains that this story is an apt symbolic expression of the restlessness and diversity of Europe. If myth may indeed be said to be "history which everyone knows," then the use of the term "Western civilization" has its validity, as does that of "Europe," to give symbolic form to the idea of a realm of common historical experience.

It may very well be that, from the standpoint of Britain, the task of European union seems to demand a stark delimitation of that area from other communities, or a chastening of cultural pride and crude "Eurocentrism." Davies observes darkly that perhaps some future crisis in the United States will prove the necessary catalyst for European cohesion. Such apocalyptic musings aside, the challenge and imperative here is to convince students that the experience of Europe has any relation at all to their own lives and future prospects. It must be brought home that developments across the Atlantic have involved Americans from their beginnings, not least in two world wars (now receding into the dim past for this generation of students). The concept of Western civilization seeks to capture the reality that the United States and other parts of the world, increasingly all parts of the world, share in aspects of an intellectual and cultural development launched out of Europe (though of course not excluding contributions from other areas), a dynamic process of contending ideas: liberalism, evolutionary conservatism, radical Enlightenment thought, nationalism, romanticism, to name but a few principal and turbulent forces.

The narrative of this huge history is interspersed with three hundred "capsules" inset into the text. These paragraphs of tangential reflections, or concentrated closeups of compelling details, are often enlightening, sometimes capricious and provocative, occasionally unabashedly playful, dotted with humor. They range from music history to oddities of linguistics, food history to nationalism, from "condom" to "Apocalypse." They are most effective when they illuminate a long-term continuity or unexpected coincidence that would otherwise be lost in the chronological procession of narrative history, or when they comment on methodology in historical study.

At the end of each major chronological section is a "wide angle snapshot," a tableau vividly presenting a critical historical moment through a disciplined act of historical imagination: the instant of the explosion of Thera around 1628 B.C. and its effect on a flourishing Cretan civilization; or the August Madness of 1914, as nervous statesmen and cheering crowds begin a modern plunge into the abyss of a man-made cataclysm. These snapshots are very successful. Maps throughout the book show the ebb and flow or outright transformation of political boundaries. The maps are printed with west at the top of the page and east at the bottom, to reinforce the unfamiliarity of this new perspective. The book's appendix includes a rich assortment of useful maps and diagrams and statistics. Unfortunately, the editing in parts of the book leaves something to be desired. Early reviews pointed out significant confusion in some dates and names. Errors in German spelling

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are frequent, most lamentably in Schiller's "Ode to Joy." In one map, the countries of Latvia and Lithuania are transposed.

Davies' account of the coherent whole of Europe is the best possible argument against new lines of division and another round of falsified, incomplete definitions of a Europe limited to the rich and satisfied, leaving out a portion of its heart and soul. Today it seems far better to agree with the conclusion of another great European, Goethe, who judged that "he who knows himself and others" knows that the old divisions are no longer tenable, and announced: "To balance oneself thoughtfully between both worlds, thus to move between East and West, I allow—that's the best." Davies' history provides a powerful example of just such a sophisticated traffic between the corners of Europe. This is exactly what is called for now, when true and durable European union must come not from a bureaucratic fiat promulgated in Brussels, but from growth out of a shared consciousness and unified understanding, as Europe comes to define itself. Davies' work of synthesis represents a formidable first stride onto the next stage of this history.

You Will Not Taste Death
Jesus and Epicureanism

Despite close Epicurean friends, Cicero called Epicureanism the most dangerous of philosophies because it undermined the virtues basic to civilization; yet it most closely approaches a modern scientific worldview. Two recently discovered documents, the *Gospel of Thomas* and the *Secret Gospel of Mark,* interrelate with the skeletal chronicle underlying the *Gospel of Mark* to make credible the authenticity of *Thomas*'s 113 sayings of Jesus and give them context. In these Jesus speaks from an Epicurean, not Judaic, stand. Author: Jack Hannah. 321 pp.pbk. $12 postpaid.

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To Know, or Not to Know

FORBIDDEN KNOWLEDGE: FROM PROMETHEUS TO PORNOGRAPHY. *By Roger Shattuck. St. Martin's Press. $26.95.*

Reviewed by RANDALL CURB

In the foreword to his new study, Roger Shattuck comes to the point in his first sentence. "Are there things we should *not* know?" he asks. Shattuck wants us above all to *think* about his question—and to think deeply. Though he never endorses de jure censorship, and though he has great respect for all areas of scientific inquiry, he concludes that there probably are some things that some people simply shouldn't know about. We learn this conclusion early on. In chapter 1, "The Far Side of Curiosity," he quotes Nicholas Rescher, the American scholar and philosopher of science. In an essay also called "Forbidden Knowledge," Rescher said in 1987: "Some information is simply not safe for us—not because there is something wrong with its possession in the abstract, but because it is the sort of thing we humans are not well suited to cope with." Shattuck immediately agrees with Rescher, who goes on to speak of "the fog of uncertainty" in which mortal man lives. Both scholars believe that we are defined as human beings by this fog. If we were to possess complete knowledge, Rescher says, "it would no longer be a human mode of existence that we would live. Instead we would become a being of another sort, perhaps angelic, perhaps machine-like, but certainly not human."

It may seem obvious to say so, but Shattuck wants us to remain human. And it is the documents of our humanity—literature—through which he charts our curiosity, our longing for knowledge that eludes (or is denied) us. In a book full of ideas both philosophical and moral, Shattuck offers us a panoramic odyssey of stories, running the gamut of Western civili-

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zation. He says his book is "a history of stories" more than it is a history of ideas. He links the two with a beautiful clarity: "We need ideas to reason logically and to explore the fog of uncertainty that surrounds the immediate encounter with daily living. Equally, we need stories to embody the medium of time in which human character takes shape and reveals itself to us, and in which we discover our own mortality."

The first stories he visits are the oldest ones: Pandora's box, Prometheus's betrayal of the gods, Odysseus and the call of the Sirens, Adam and Eve and the Tree of Knowledge (both in Genesis and in *Paradise Lost*). All of these myths illustrate what Shattuck wittily calls "The Wife of Bath effect," for it is Chaucer's pilgrim who observed, "Forbede us thyng, and that desiren we." Perhaps the supreme variation on that theme is the story of Faust, which Shattuck explores side-by-side with Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. Reading Shelley's novel as "a retort to *Faust*," he says that while Goethe's "Adam" is praised for seeking knowledge "beyond all bounds," the Frankenstein monster-Adam is a true horror unleashed upon the world via the "Promethean hubris" of a mortal whose quest must be looked upon with moral terror. Shattuck applies the Greek word *pleonexia* to such aspiration; it is "the insatiable greed for the unattainable . . . [going] beyond common hubris in refusing any limit, any horizon." We find *pleonexia* not merely in literature, of course. Shattuck cites Caligula, Tamerlane, Napoleon. He leaves it to us to add more recent names to the list of infamy.

All of the stories in the first third of the book are concerned with the downward path to wisdom, the consequences of which range from banishment to homicide. In most cases, the downward path is through forbidden experience, by which forbidden knowledge is gained. (An ever-vigilant moralist, Shattuck adds that "any experience, when reflected upon, incurs guilt.") But some literature takes up these issues from an opposing perspective, from the resistance to forbidden knowledge, the rejection of much experience, the embracing of limits, "the pleasures of abstinence."

In this portion of his study, Shattuck juxtaposes an early French novel unfamiliar to most readers—Madame de La Fayette's *La Princesse de Clèves* (1678)—and the poetry of Emily Dickinson. *La Princesse* is all about one woman's continual renunciation of physical love, which she prefers to "know" only through her imagination. (In the title character, Shattuck sees a forebear for several George Eliot heroines.) The well-known abstinences and abnegations of Emily Dickinson's life often appear in her poetry as near liberation. "I taste a liquor never brewed," she declares, and, in "This world is not conclusion," she affirms that while "a Species stands beyond," it cannot be grasped by philosophy. "And through a Riddle, at the last—/ Sagacity must go." Though Shattuck quotes different poems, such as "Heaven—is what I cannot reach," his point is unequivocal. The conclusion he draws from *La Princesse* and Dickinson's poetry is a cunning paradox: "that to acknowledge a limit on experience may extend our freedom to be ourselves."

Shattuck is a decided literary provocateur in his analysis of at least two works. He takes the old adage "*Tout comprendre c'est tout pardonner*" and sees it as facile and, worse, morally relativist. It is also the reason, made possible by the sly narrative style of Camus, why most readers are sympathetic to the murderer Meursault in *The Stranger*. Shattuck views such sympathy as undeserved. Camus has tricked us, he says, made us *think* we understand (and can thus forgive) a killer. Is our empathy, then, dangerous? Does it "hide more than it reveals"? Since, in reality, we can never understand *all*, we must be very careful with the limited knowledge we have. If we aren't, Shattuck argues, "we can lose our way and come to find no fault and no guilt" in a Meursault, though we know a salient truth: He committed murder.

The dangers of empathy are one thing, those of identification another. This brings us to Shattuck's devastating assessment of the works of the Marquis de Sade, in a long (seventy-two-page) chapter that comes with a warning tantamount to an NC-17 movie rating. With ample, terrifying illustrations from Sade's writings on the exhilarations of sex combined with violence and murder, Shattuck makes his case. It is not a plea for bans or censorship. It is a reasoned argument for recognizing Sade's work for what it is—pornogra-

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phy, not literature. He brings to bear extra-literary evidence in the influence of Sade on amoral killers like Ted Bundy and the Moors murderers, but he knows that most people will not adopt the marquis' savageries as their personal pleasure principle. (After spending several months reading Sade, he writes, "No, I do not believe I have been harmed by this experience. But I can imagine it having such an effect.") It is the critics who have successfully "rehabilitated" Sade and laureled him with genius—as "prophet" and "true poet"—who repel Shattuck. Their names are redoubtable in post-modern and deconstructionist circles: Roland Barthes, Michel Foucault. And for the completion of Sade's recent "consecration," Shattuck exposes (that is the word) Pier Paolo Pasolini, Ingmar Bergman, Camille Paglia, and the editors of the Bibliothèque de la Pléiade.

The Sade chapter almost overwhelms the book. It wears the reader out, and, while never less than lucid, is in a hortatory voice that sounds a strident, overstressed note. After reading it, you certainly understand Shattuck's reverence for Milton and Dickinson. Yet he ends the chapter and rests his case confidently and, for me, unimpeachably. "The divine marquis represents forbidden knowledge that we must not forbid. Consequently, we should label his writings carefully: potential poison, polluting to our moral and intellectual environment."

Only one chapter is not concerned with stories. Called "Knowledge Exploding," it employs the more abstract words of scientists and legal experts. Shattuck heads this chapter with an epigram from J. Robert Oppenheimer, a man he clearly admires: "In some sort of crude sense . . . the physicists have known sin." In the vigorous discussion that follows, much of the history of science is adumbrated, from Archimedes to the atomic bomb, with particular emphasis on eugenics and the Pandora's box of DNA research. Throughout, Shattuck underscores the difficulty in separating pure from applied science. And so he returns to Nicholas Rescher and the question of whether there is any "existing or hypothetical knowledge," such as that of nuclear fission or genetic manipulation, "whose mere possession must be considered evil *in and of itself*" (Shattuck's italics). With Rescher, he answers no. Here he cites Milton's *Areopagitica*: "Whether of good or evil . . . knowledge cannot defile . . . if the will or conscience be not defiled." Thus, confronted with today's knowledge explosion, so clearly fraught with dangers, Shattuck believes that science should have its own version of the Hippocratic oath, for, as he says, "science has become as much a stewardship as holy orders . . . or medicine."

Is this a solution? Of course not. Since Shattuck acknowledges that pure science is a "modern myth," and since no oath can instill a moral conscience (and who could define that nowadays?), his seems a tepid response to potential scientific scenarios that boggle the mind with each new "advance." But is there a solution? At least Shattuck has the courage to address these complex issues and make a plea for some kind of moral sanity. Like Mary Shelley, he cautions us against monsters.

Forbidden Knowledge is a work of sobering reason. Its scope would be unwieldy if its author weren't so adept at cross-disciplinary analogy. Its erudition might seem pompous if it weren't so cogently engaging. Shattuck's final plea—that "the time has come to think as intently about limits as about liberation"—might have been laughed off the page twenty or thirty years ago. Who will show us the path to wisdom now? While cataloguing and investigating the many realms of forbidden knowledge, Roger Shattuck has chosen his heroes. Nietzsche, Foucault, and the Marquis de Sade are not among them.

Gracelessness Under Pressure

THE ONLY THING THAT COUNTS: THE ERNEST HEMINGWAY-MAXWELL PERKINS CORRESPONDENCE, 1925–1947. *Edited by Matthew J. Bruccoli. Scribners. $32.50.*

Reviewed by GERALD HOWARD

Unlike F. Scott Fitzgerald, Thomas Wolfe and Ernest Hemingway, the three authors with whom he is most closely identified, Maxwell Perkins improves upon closer acquaintance. What a hat trick of high-maintenance authors this justly legendary Scribner's editor

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ministered to—an improvident dipsomaniac, a raging narcissist, and a prickly paranoid, respectively. Editing any one of them—in cleaning up their messes, salving their wounds, blunting their rages *and* seeing to the endless details involved in publishing their books *and* serving as an honest broker between these questionable characters and a culturally and financially conservative publishing house—would have constituted a full-time job. The task required the patience of a saint, the stamina of a wheelhorse, and the dogged calmness of a professional diplomat—all qualities Perkins possessed in abundance.

The Only Thing That Counts memorializes the longest of these relationships, Perkins's twenty-two-year run as the godawful Ernest Hemingway's editor. It offers a selection of the two men's dual correspondence, compiled and edited by Matthew Bruccoli, who is to the Lost Generation what an industrial-strength vacuum cleaner is to an office carpet. In his fussy and somewhat peevish editorial note, Professor Bruccoli complains that "production requirements" dictated "the regrettable and challengeable" need to cut many of Hemingway's letters. "In what is allegedly the real world, the choice had to be made between losing an entire letter or printing the most useful parts," he pouts—but there are few readers outside the alleged academy who will feel this necessity as anything other than a blessing. He goes on to bemoan the inadequacy of traditional typesetting to convey the untidiness and energy of Hemingway's letters, stopping just short of suggesting the need for a facsimile edition.

In point of fact, though, for all the scrupulous word counts of missing material and similar fussiness, *The Only Thing That Counts* is under-edited and particularly under-head- and footnoted. One somewhat macabre example: We learn in a footnote that the "shotgun book" Hemingway thanks Perkins for is *Shot-Gun Psychology* by one Lawrence Smith. Given the ghastly manner of Hemingway's death, one longs to know something more about that book. . . . Some of Professor Bruccoli's mania for inclusiveness might have been usefully rechanneled into a care for the needs of the general reader.

Unlike *Editor to Author: The Letters of Maxwell Perkins*, a superb compilation of Perkins's letters to a wide range of authors, including the Three Amigos, *The Only Thing That Counts* is a hard book to recommend. As a self-commissioned festschrift of sorts for the house of Scribners (formerly Scribner's) to celebrate a shining chapter in its illustrious history, it has an appealing quality. But the shine does not finally survive the longueurs that a defter editor could have avoided. There is nothing of a literary nature in this book that has not been well aired somewhere in the hundreds of volumes produced by the Hemingway industry, and, in any case, Perkins was always intimidated by Hemingway's literary authority and did not become editorially involved with his books much at all—in stark contrast to his agons with Thomas Wolfe, in which he actually had to edit his author's dedication to himself. The personality that Hemingway projects in these letters is so loathsome (more on this anon) that the book could literally drive readers away from his work. (I had to rinse my mind clear of the bad taste with a brace of his best short stories before writing this review.) What value the book does have, then, is as a study in publishing practice: a master class in the art of keeping an immensely difficult author of world stature if not happy with a house, then at least quiescent and less than terminally disgruntled. In this respect, the book chronicles a virtuoso performance on Perkins's part.

Charles Scribner, Jr., once justified the posthumous publication of Hemingway's letters by saying: "I believe his letters show a side of him that nothing else in his work does, and it is a very nice side." Either Mr. Scribner was being ravingly disingenuous or he hadn't spent much time in the Hemingway/Perkins file, for the side most on display here is that of a boastful, insecure, aggressive, suspicious, catty, anti-Semitic, misogynist, disloyal, whining malcontent. Several of the rockets poor Perkins had to field and respond to are so vile toward everything and everybody that I cringed for him. In particular, Hemingway's condescending, faux-paternalistic remarks on F. Scott Fitzgerald's work and his disaster-prone life are almost sickening in their smugness and their betrayals—and must have been deeply wounding for the steadfast Perkins to have read. It is obvious that Hemingway felt an exceptional freedom to vent his worst side in his letters to

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his publisher—as backhanded a compliment as one could wish.

What a vast range of targets, what a church organ's worth of self-pitying and self-aggrandizing notes, Hemingway commanded! As early as *The Sun Also Rises* (1926), the first novel he published with Scribner's, Hemingway had the paranoid mindset down. "Because if The Sun should have some success there will be a lot of people with the knife out very eager to see me slipping," he informed Perkins. By *Death in the Afternoon* (1933), a twitting review by Max Eastman elicited this effusion: "I am tempted never to publish another thing. The swine aren't worth writing for. . . . Every phase of the whole racket is so disgusting that it makes you feel like vomiting." In 1935 he wrote: "For Christ's sake Max don't you see that they have to attack me to believe in themselves?" and by 1940, reviews of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* by Edmund Wilson and John Chamberlain had Hemingway howling grandiosely, "I care nothing about what any shits say now because they are just digging their own grave by saying it."

Hemingway's grudge against Wilson is an interesting case. In 1923 Hemingway sent him a copy of *Three Stories and Ten Poems* with the fawning remark that "As far as I can think at the minute yours is the only critical opinion in the States I have any respect for." But by 1941, put out by Wilson's by no means unkind essay on him in *The Wound and the Bow*, suspecting that the "wound" referred to was of a sexual nature, he gets off the one witty remark in this book: "I still have a hell of a Bow though and that is what he can't forgive. Some day when I write my memoirs I will shoot him with it."

Often Hemingway's exceptional animus would erupt in the direction of Scribner's. His litany of complaints offers a virtual encyclopedia of authorial discontent: the business office had no faith in the sales potential of his books; the ads were too small, ineffective in their copy or placement, stopped from running just when a book was taking off; his royalty statements were fouled up or insufficiently reflective of sales; the cover art for his book stank and his name was too minuscule to be read; the real muscle of the firm was being put behind the second-rate commercial books while his were left to shift for themselves; nobody but Perkins at the company really understood his literary struggles or really cared.

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This is standard-issue stuff, familiar to any editor or professional writer, but Hemingway delivered it in either a pitch of bullying hysteria or excruciating bathos. (This, after all, was a man who could blow his stack about "the sale or lack of it" of *For Whom the Bell Tolls*—which, at the time of his writing, had *500,000 copies* in print.) As one reads these letters, one pictures the placid, stately Perkins, behatted at his desk, opening the airmail envelope from Key West, Paris, Nairobi, Havana, digesting the contents, heaving a long sigh and trudging down to Mr. Scribner's office for yet another Serious Talk.

What went on in those inevitable conferences Professor Bruccoli sayeth not. In Hemingway's direction, though, Perkins was never aggrieved or defensive, sending back steady signals of fond loyalty and literary appreciation, explaining Scribner's business decisions forthrightly. He clearly had this particular volcano well clocked, knowing when Hemingway was likely to explode and when he would subside. He was better friend and editor, frankly,

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than Hemingway deserved—and Hemingway knew it. One of his few moments of grace comes in a letter in which he writes, "I always have to have someone I can trust and write frankly to and that person has always been you Max . . . please don't get sore at me. I need your sound advice, your judgement and your help." Indeed he did—and he got it.

Perkins falls a bit short of sainthood, though. While he had nerve—witness his legendary staring down of Scribner's stuffy editorial board on behalf of F. Scott Fitzgerald's racy *This Side of Paradise*—he knew very well how far he could, and wanted to, go. Negative assessments of Max Perkins are hard to find, but the ever-reliable Dawn Powell, who published three novels with him and even named her cat "Max," mused in her diaries that his vaunted integrity was a smokescreen for financial and aesthetic timidity. "The word indicates a life run on fear—fear of losing his professional position; fear of making a financial error; fear of not showing an annual profit; fear of giving in to a brave artistic impulse." This harsh but not totally unfair judgment ran through my mind as I read the letters about the famous episode of the obscene words Hemingway wanted to print in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* intact, and which Perkins insisted must be left entirely or strategically blank. (For the record, THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR today would print only one of them, "balls.") A staunch antagonist of the genteel tradition, Hemingway argued, validly if mulishly, from the point of view of artistic integrity: this was the way people talked and fiction must be a true representation of characters in all their aspects, however unlovely.

Perkins, playing his appointed role as a responsible publisher, urged caution on the grounds that the inflammatory words would become the sole issue readers and reviewers would concentrate on and that book banning was a distinct possibility. Earlier, Perkins had suggested that Hemingway "reduce somewhat the implications of physical aspects in the relationship" between Frederick Henry and Catherine Barkley, so his guard was up. What ensues is an excruciating and slightly comical character-by-character horse trading between the two men, with the author struggling to fill in as many letters in the three most offensive words as possible. "I don't think we can print those three words, Ernest. I can't find *anyone* who thinks so," Perkins writes at one point, betraying clear signs of being a bit of a trimmer, bluenose, and company man. In the end caution prevailed, but Hemingway got his own back in a way, in the bitterest author's letter I have ever read: "So I guess it's all just a racket like all the rest of it and the way I feel tonight is to hell with it—all I got out of this book is disappointment," he keens. Later in the letter he addresses Perkins directly: "Sometimes I wish to God you weren't my friend and instead I was with some firm I hated so I could put the screws on and rachet them from the other side"—a squirm-making tribute if there ever was one.

Perkins's editorial relationship and his friendship with Hemingway survived this tiff for eighteen more years, and eight more books before the distinguished editor died in 1947. Most observers attributed Perkins's relatively early death (he was sixty-two) to overwork and the steady toll of heavy drinking and smoking. If Hemingway had certainly provided many of the glories of Perkins's publishing career, he had with equal certainty contributed far more than his portion of wear and tear on this repressed and melancholy man's nerves and life force. It is telling that earlier in 1947, Perkins, contemplating a seven-year dry spell in his novel production, had confided to his wife, "Hemingway is through." Hemingway never got a whiff of this, of course, and he roused himself to gallantry (at last, one is tempted to say) for the occasion. He wrote Charles Scribner, "One of my best and most loyal friends and wisest counsellors in life as well as in writing is dead. But Charles Scribner's Sons are my publishers and I intend to publish with them for the rest of my life." That second sentence would have been the one Max applauded.

Greatness is a word that fits uneasily when applied to an editor—the job fights against that description—but if ever any book editor deserved this honorific it was Maxwell Perkins. His death closed a golden era in American publishing, as sure as the glorious space on Fifth Avenue that once housed the Scribner's book store now hawks the United Colors of Benetton. Much of what made him great and extravagantly admired and widely beloved can be found in this book.

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The Reader Replies

Schubert at 200

In "Schubert at 200" (Summer 1997), Joseph Horowitz states with certainty that syphilis accounted for the composer's bad health and sense of doom during the last five or six years of his life. If he did indeed contract the disease when he was twenty-five or twenty-six years old, its course was extremely rapid, so quick that one is forced to question the diagnosis. Syphilis was certainly rapidly progressive in the sixteenth century when it appears to have been introduced into Europe, coming to be called the French disease everywhere but in France. But with serial passage the process became much less acute. Later it was recognized that many victims enter a latent period which can last as long as thirty years. In others permanent remissions may occur.

Microscopic pathology was not yet introduced, and it would be several decades before serological testing for syphilis (Wassermann) would become available. Hence when Schubert is said to have suffered, the clinical course and natural history of lues were not at all clearly defined. If an autopsy were performed at his death, it might have revealed gross changes such as rupture of a thoracic aortic aneurysm consistent with the diagnosis, but again the course was fast and it is hard see how cardiovascular syphilis could have provoked Schubert's sense of doom.

However, as Susan Sontag, among others, has pointed out, illness can become metaphor to the extent that metaphor comes to define disease. In the absence of adequate pathological evidence to confirm the diagnosis of lues, Schubert's diagnosis could well have been metaphorical rather than real. A case could just as well be made that malnutrition—the starving in the garret syndrome was a major etiologic factor contributing to his early death, and death in five to six years after initial symptoms is much more consistent with tuberculosis, an extremely common condition in those years.

JOHN H. FELTS, M.D.
Winston-Salem, North Carolina

JOSEPH HOROWITZ replies: There is now widespread scholarly consensus that Schubert died of syphilis. An influential study, with which Dr. Felts may not be familiar, is Eric Sams's "Schubert's Illness Re-examined," in *The Musical Times*, volume 121 (1980).

The Aging of Democracies

Given the sorry treatment the United States has often received from European critics, one is grateful to Professor C. Vann Woodward for setting the record straight in "The Aging of Democracies" in the Summer 1997 issue. The United States is an elder statesman in the field of majority rule; its advice and example may be of use to the new democracies of Eastern Europe and elsewhere. But why trot out the hobgoblin of "the recent triumph of reactionary and irrational politics," when no such triumph has occurred or is likely to? Isolationism and xenophobia appeal to a small number of Americans; the great mass of voters has rejected them repeatedly. The winning strategy in presidential elections seems now to be to shift from Left to Center, adopting a few conservative positions along the way in order to smooth the transition. The result might be termed a triumph of mediocrity, but hardly one of reaction, unless your idea of reaction includes the standard liberal pieties, that is, preaching the abolition of privilege while practicing a politics of diversity. Professor Woodward has left me confused on this point. He writes that the history of democracy in America has been a casualty list of presumptions to political authority based on social rank. Does this not put him in the ranks of the reactionaries who would abolish presumptions to authority based on race, gender, height, weight, and sexual orientation?

ROBERT M. KORNFELD
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C. VANN WOODWARD replies: If the "ranks of reactionaries" really do include, as my critic says, those "who would abolish presumptions of authority based on race, gender, height, weight, and sexual orientation," I suppose I would have to be included among the reactionaries. In my essay, however, I say, "As the presumptions of privilege diminish, the categories of people once excluded from political participation play more conspicuous roles." In welcoming this expansion of participants, I admit that they would unfortunately include many fanatics, zealots, and bigots. But I conclude by quoting Alexis de Tocqueville as saying that we are "left with no other alterative than democratic freedom or the tyranny of the Caesars."

Bogie in Africa

Jeffrey Meyers's assertion in "Bogie in Africa" (Spring 1997) that Humphrey Bogart was "accustomed to fame as a child, when his portrait had been used to advertise baby food" apparently rests on the persistent urban folklore story that the Gerber baby grew up to be the star of *Casablanca*. The Gerber baby logo was taken from a charcoal sketch submitted to the Gerber Products company by a Boston artist in 1928, when Bogart was twenty-nine years old. For many years, the model for the Gerber baby has been publicly identified as Mrs. Ann Turner Cook, of Tampa, Florida. Tom Burnam, who researched this question for his book *More Misinformation* (Lippincott & Crowell, 1980), quotes Gerber's P.R. department as saying that it is "entirely possible and, in fact, probable" that Bogart's likeness was used in baby-food advertising for some other company, just not Gerber's. This assertion is not based on any documented facts other than that Bogart's mother occasionally sold sketches to commercial concerns for advertising purposes. There is no historical evidence whatsoever either that her buyers included baby-food concerns or that these sketches included her son's likeness. Fame arising from a *possibility* or even *probability* of his mother having sold a picture of him for commercial exploitation is too tenuous for Bogart to have basked in or for Meyers to state as a historical fact.

GARETH PENN
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JEFFREY MEYERS replies: Penn's pedantic letter stumbles fatally on the word *apparently* and tries to put words as well as Gerber's baby food into my mouth. I never said there was any connection between Bogart and Gerber's. In fact, as I wrote in my book *Bogart: A Life in Hollywood* (Houghton Mifflin, 1997), p. 8, "Maud Bogart made drawings of her chubby-cheeked, sparsely-thatched infant, who became famous when he appeared in a national advertising campaign for *Mellin's* baby food." Bogart himself said, referring to Maud's ads: "there was a period in American history when you couldn't pick up a goddamned magazine without seeing my kisser in it" (quoted in Meyers, p. 8).

Revolution in the Library

Gertrude Himmelfarb pays my field and the entire Internet a generous compliment with her statement, " . . . some of us are prepared to say that we are now witnessing another revolution, a post-industrial revolution, the electronic revolution" ("Revolution in the Library," Spring 1997 AMERICAN SCHOLAR). However, she is overly pessimistic while assessing the possible deleterious effects of this revolution, and she makes a few errors of fact along the way.

The core of her warning is contained in the wonderful paragraph, "What we are now confronting, therefore, is not one but two revolutions—an intellectual and a technological revolution which bear an uncanny resemblance to each other and have a symbiotic relationship to each other. If I were given to conspiratorial theories, I might speculate that Bill Gates, the chairman of Microsoft, is a secret agent of Jacques Derrida, the high priest of postmodernism. For the new technology is the perfect medium for the new ideology. Surfing through cyberspace is a truly postmodernist experience, a liberation from what the postmodernist calls 'linear thinking'—a logical, rational mode of reasoning."

It is undoubtedly true that the non-linear, visual nature of hypertext on the World Wide Web, the blending of text and images, the ability to jump from place to place using hypertext links, is changing the way we think and read. But there is a surprising amount of old-fashioned logical, rational thinking going on under the hood. At some point, Web surfers find they actually have to understand something difficult. Then, guess what, they actually ponder lines of text, just as we old fogies do. It turns out that it is hard to stay liberated for long.

Even the contrast between the non-linear nature of hypertext and conventional modes of

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reading can be overemphasized. When I am reading something difficult and worthwhile in a conventional book, I find that I frequently have to page back and forth to refresh my memory. I do not know of a single computer scientist, or mathematician, or historian for that matter, who does not read in this highly non-linear way. Hypertext was invented to make this easier, and, when it is well written, it does. The bottom line is that the postmodernists are going to have to do a bit more than catch a free ride on Bill Gates's coattails to overturn the structure of Western Civilization.

Gertrude Himmelfarb is right to call attention to the vast amounts of worthless material on the World Wide Web. However, she is overly pessimistic when she assesses how much of quality is actually available. For example, in regard to Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Rousseau's *Social Contract,* she guesses that "What is more likely is that something like a *Cliffs Notes* version of them is on line." In fact, the complete texts of both the first and the revised editions of *Paradise Lost* are available from Mindspring at the URL http://www.mindspring.com/-verax/milton.htm. As for Rousseau, *The Confessions* is available from Virgina Tech at the URL gopher://gopher.vt.edu:10010/02/137/1, but I must confess that the only on-line copy of *The Social Contract* I could find required a subscription to the ARTFL project at the University of Chicago (http://humanities.uchicago.edu/ARTFL/ARTFL.html). But while browsing for a publicly available copy of *The Social Contract,* I did find the complete Ross translation of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* at Virgina Tech, at the URL gopher://gopher.vt.edu:10010/02/39/15. Not bad for a medium which is supposedly the province of spaced-out Web heads, techno-nerds, and weak-minded postmodernists. (By the way, the place to start in any hunt for electronic text seems to be *The On Line Books Page* at Carnegie Mellon University at the URL http://www.cs.cmu.edu/books.html.)

In the opposite direction, Himmelfarb is overly optimistic about the ease of use of digital electronic media. It is true that we seem to be raising a generation of students who prefer Web surfing to book reading, but this impression may be misleading. First, a book page contains far more text than a typical screen display. Second, it is possible to have two pages visible at once with a book, something only the most outrageously expensive monitors now permit. Third, and directly contrary to Himmelfarb's assertions, it is far faster to page through a book than to scroll through a large electronic text file. Finally, the advent of personal computers and the Internet has produced, what else, a publishing boom in *computer books.* All those trees have to die because people prefer reading directions in books to viewing them on a screen. I think Gertrude Himmelfarb can be comforted; books are here to stay.

Himmelfarb displays great insight when she compares the electronic revolution, in which we are now immersed, with the print revolution begun by Gutenberg. In both cases, the consequent democratization of knowledge had, and will have, profound effects on our culture. On the whole, though, I do not buy her argument that the "democratization of knowledge itself" is a serious danger. By the "democratization of knowledge itself," she means the tendency of the Internet to recognize "no rank or status or privilege. . . . all sources, all ideas, all theories seem equally valid and pertinent." This leveling tendency is certainly a real property of the Internet, but the consequent overturning of authority seems entirely comparable to "the liberation of culture from the control of clerics and scribes," which, as she points out, was a principal consequence of the first print revolution. Surely today's Internet trash is directly comparable to the "ephemeral popular books . . . produced as cheaply as classical ones," and the "heretical tracts (produced) as readily as canonical ones" which, as she so correctly points out, marked the first print revolution. The ignorant and weak-minded have had plenty of trash available since shortly after Gutenberg's press started rolling, and somehow we have managed to muddle through. And, one must note, some of yesterday's heretical tracts, for example Galileo's, are today's great classics.

In Galileo's time, almost everything, from the undeniably great to the totally nonsensical, was published privately. Today, it is rare for a privately printed work, by which I mean a work paid for out of the private resources of the author, to be taken seriously. But, as Himmelfarb insightfully points out, the World Wide Web is resurrecting the tradition of private publication. The world of the Internet today looks much like the world of print shortly after Gutenberg, and we can expect similar responses (not including, let us hope, another Thirty Years War). Just as the proliferation of tracts of all sorts after the first print revolution eventually brought forth the creation of refereed scientific journals in the nineteenth century to bring some order and quality into the scientific literature, so too is the profusion of sources of all sorts on the Internet bringing forth a number of responses, not least of which is the creation of refereed electronic journals. (In fact, from the point of view of the democratization of knowledge, the problem may be not the proliferation of trash, but the fact that more and more of the high-quality material, including some of the electronic journals, is avail-

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able only by paid subscription.) It is entirely likely that the devices that have worked so well since the nineteenth century will continue to work well in the twenty-first. What is also likely to happen, in my estimation, is that the *number* of knowledge communities will increase, because it is so much cheaper to publish on the Web. Whether one regards that as bad or good depends, I suppose, on whether one agrees with Lenin that ". . . liberty is precious—so precious that it must be rationed." I have faith that Gertrude Himmelfarb would side with those who do not wish to ration liberty.

The electronic knowledge revolution is beginning to look very much like the earlier print revolution. It is surely a grand irony that the same technology is responsible for both, namely, *printing*. The inexpensive computer chips, containing millions of transistors, which make modern computers possible, are themselves made possible by a modern elaboration of a printing process so ancient that it *predates* Gutenberg, namely lithography. More precisely, the process used is an elaboration of photolithography—a considerable elaboration I will admit, but recognizable as a version of photolithography nonetheless. Computers today are powerful, cheap, and accessible because the chips they are made from are powerful and cheap, and the chips are cheap because it is possible to *print* millions of copies from the original *plates* (more precisely, print millions of copies from the original *masks*). It would seem that the electronic knowledge revolution is a continuation of Gutenberg's print revolution, carried forward after a pause of centuries by similar means.

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Editors' Note

"Anglophilia, American Style" by Aristides (Summer 1997 SCHOLAR) was adapted from the author's lecture at the Institute of United States Studies at the University of London.

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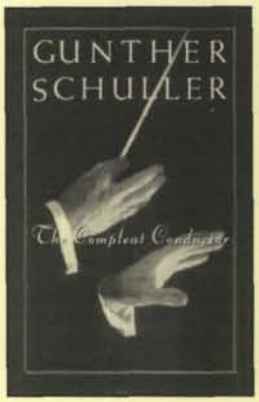

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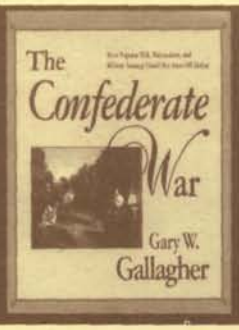

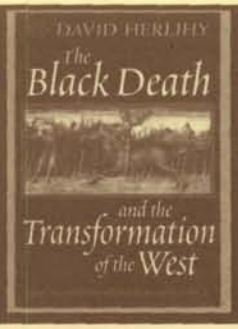

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